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井上堅二
Kenji Inoue

バカとテストと召喚獣7.5

井上堅二

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Novel Illustrations

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バカとテスト
召喚獣 73
～制服は誰がために!?の巻～
うう…
吉井明久
Akihisa Yoshii
土屋康太
(ムッツリーニ)
Kouta Tsuchiya
YOU'VE BEEN HAD, AKI-HISA...
I... CAN NEVER GET MAR-RIED...
うう…
…VERY PITI-FUL.
坂本雄二
Yuuji Sakamoto

WELL, AKIHI-SA--KUN
THAT'S RIGHT
IT'S GREAT THAT YOU'RE SO CUTE
NOT AT ALL!
島田美波
Minami Shimada
THAT CLOTHING SUITS YOU RATHER WELL, YOU KNOW?
姫路瑞希
Mizuki Himeji
BUT DON'T SCOTTISH MALES WEAR SUCH MALE SKIRTS?
Kilt.
YEAH! IT'S REALLY AN IMPOR-TANT OUTFIT.
THIS IS JAPAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!

THIS THING CALLED CLOTHING IS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO GENDER
LISTEN UP, YOU TWO
BUT—
NO BUTS!
TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THIS BETTER
YOU TWO CAN TRY THIS OUT
FOR EXAMPLE—

I'VE BEEN WEARING THIS TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY, YOU KNOW!?
うーん...
WELL DOESN'T IT FEEL WEIRD?
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS BEING WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S RIGHT!

WHA!? MIHA RU!?
ONEE-SAMA! THIS SUITS YOU REALLY WELL!!
UU... THAT'S TRUE...
IT LOOKS GOOD ON ME, DOESN'T IT?
.....
I THINK IT'S MORE OF WHETHER THE CLOTHES SUIT THE PERSON RATHER THAN THE GENDER.
DON'T YOU THINK?
UN...

AS EXPEC-TED...
ISN'T THERE SOME-THING WEIRD ABOUT WEARING THIS...
木下秀吉
Hideyoshi Kinoshita
可愛ければイイじゃない!
本編へGO!

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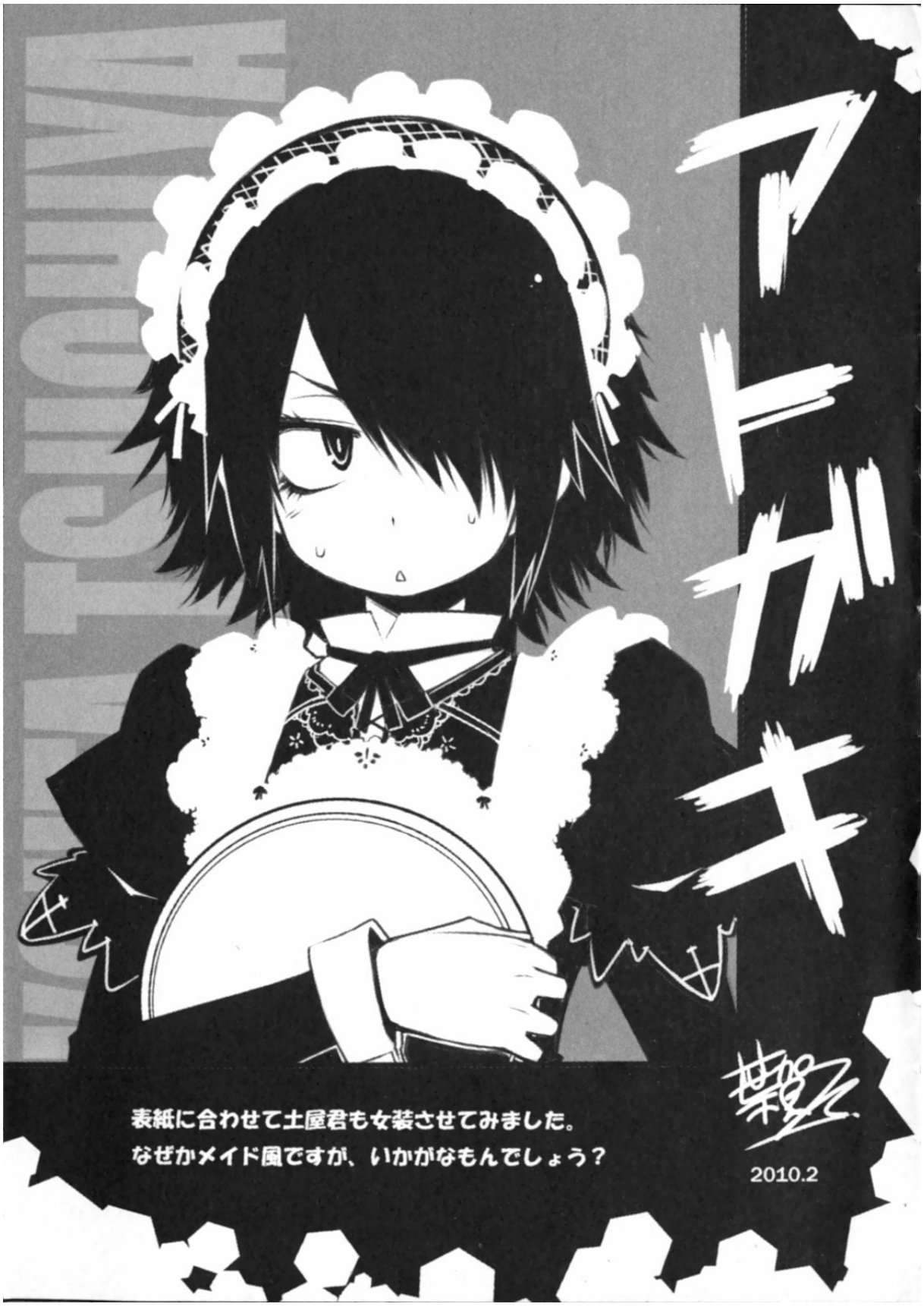
バカとテスト召喚獣 7.5

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

（※7月分）



表紙に合わせて土屋君も女装させてみました。
なぜかメイド風ですが、いかがなもんでしょう？

葉月

2010.2

Our Song by Yoshii Akihisa

Let's buy a sky-blue pen.

And treat everyday as an anniversary.

Draw a round circle on the calendar, and add another memory to us.

There's no need to bother about the reason.

We're living now,

Just this fact would make this day irreplaceable, a day worth remembering.

The blue rings drawn on the calendar are,

The days called 'Survive a Near-Death Experience day'.

Author: Yoshii Akihisa.

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

（※ JULY ）

Me and Doubt and a Man's Pride

僕と
ダウトと
男の尊厳

“Akihisa-kun, if I win the next round, can you please put on this girl's outfit?”

“Ahaha, you really like to joke around, Himeji-san.”

“Akihisa-kun, if I win the next round, can you please put on this girl's outfit?”

“Ahaha, your joke's quite good, Himeji-san.”

“Akihisa-kun, if I win the next round, can you please put on this girl's outfit?”

“Aha...ha, really, Himeji-san, you really like to joke around. Is that it? That should be a joke, right?”

“Akihisa-kun, if I win the next round, can you please put on this girl's outfit?”

“HIMEJI-SAN! I BEG OF YOU, HURRY UP AND TELL ME THAT WAS A JOKE!”

“...Yuuji, I'll make you take off your pants when you lose next time.”

“Shouko! Don't think you can beat me every time...you're the one stripping next!”

As we hold our cards in one hand, the atmosphere around us felt abnormally tense.

“Oi, Yuuji...how did it end up like this?”

“How would I know...”

Right now, Yuuji and I could only look up and sigh.

--Everything started from something trivial.

“Everyone, since we're free, want to play doubt?”

As the teachers had to organize a staff meeting, lessons ended earlier today, so I took out my poker cards and asked Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini.

“Doubt? Are you talking about poker?”

“Yeah.”

I nodded at Yuuji. It's not as well-known as old maid or sevens, but 'doubt' can be said to be a rather well-known poker card game, so quite a few people should know it.

“What's the matter, Akihisa? Did you have a lot of money recently?”

“Sort of. There hadn't been any new games released that I had to buy recently.”

The reason why Yuuji asked me whether I was well-off was simple, and to be honest, this wasn't something worth showing off, but we do bet when we play poker games. A loser who lost once had to treat everyone juice, 3 times would be Gyudon, and a hamburger set after 5 losses. The level of treat would continue to increase with the number of games. I was thoroughly beaten the last time, so I had to treat them hamburger sets. This time, I have to win.

“...I don't mind.”

“The drama club had no practice today. I can play with you guys.”

“Count me in too. How can I let you go off with free money without squeezing you dry?”

Seems like they never thought that they would lose anyway as they accepted my proposal without thinking. They must be waiting to see me lose terribly like the last time right? Damn it, I'll make your smiles become crying faces of despair!

“Then it's decided. Rules are as per normal, right?”

After everyone nodded their heads in agreement, I started to shuffle and distribute the cards.

Now, let me explain the rules of doubt first.

1.When the first person (to us, the one who got Ace of spades) shout 'A', he has to put the card face down (it doesn't matter whether it's Ace or not).

2.Then, we continue to call '2', '3', '4' to 'Jack' Queen' 'King' as we throw out cards (for example, if the order is me→Yuuji→Muttsurnini→Hideyoshi, I'll call 'Ace', Yuuji will call '2', Muttsurini will call '3', and Hideyoshi will be '4'. Everyone will throw the number of the card they have, and after 'King' is called, we'll start from 'Ace' again).

3.The number that was called need not be the same as the card that was thrown to the center, but if someone called 'doubt' and the card did not match the number, the one doubting had to keep all the cards back.

4.On the other hand, if someone called doubt and the card was the same as the number given, the one who called 'doubt' would have to take back all the cards.

5.Amongst the participants, if one player has only 2 cards left, the game would be over. At this point, everyone would see how many cards the remaining players have to decide the loser.

That's basically the gist of it.

Normally, the rules of doubt state that we have to play until someone doesn’t have any cards left, but we’ll end up playing on non-stop, so we came up with special rules. Once someone has 3 cards left, the person will win if one of the remaining cards is one that he needs to call. Even if he lies, he’s the winner of this game of doubt if he’s not caught.

“Oh, I’ll start first then, ‘Ace’!”

Yuuji threw a card face down at the middle. That must be the Ace of spades, right?

“I’ll throw ‘2’ then.”

Then, Hideyoshi threw his card out. There are only 4 cards with the same number. If I have four ‘2’s in my hand, I can tell that Hideyoshi’s lying…but my hand has a ‘2’, so it’s not enough proof to call doubt.

“…‘3’.”

Muttsurini threw his card down, and it’s finally my turn. I need to call ‘4’, uu… too bad I don’t have a ‘4’ in my hand. Oh well, I guess it should be alright. They can’t possibly call doubt on me so early now, so I just need to slip a card through. Since I have three ‘10’s in my hand, I’ll just use one.

“‘4’.”

“““DOUBT!!!”””

I took back the 4 cards immediately.

“Uu…humph! That’s part of the plan, no problems at all.”

“Really, your expression can’t fool anyone.”

“Yeah, Akihisa’s ‘it’s okay to bluff since it’s just the beginning’ attitude was really obvious.”

“…You’re really not suited to playing poker.”

Damn it, you guys just had to say it.

It’s alright though. The game’s just beginning, and I only took 4 cards. There’s still time for a turnaround.

“No problems. I’m different from you guys. I won’t show my cards foolishly like that right at the beginning. You’ll suffer in the end anyway.”

I gathered the 4 cards and added them to my hand.

The cards I got were,

‘6’, ‘9’, ‘Jack’.

“…You guys…none of you…! Nobody was honest at all!”

At least there was no need to bluff for the first ‘Ace’.

“Stop yapping, Akihisa. Hurry up and put your card down.”

“Humph, I know that without you telling me, liar Yuuji.”

As I interrupted the game when I called ‘4’, I have to start now. In this situation, the person starting the game can call whatever number he likes. If that’s the case…since I have two ‘5’s, let’s start from 5 then.

“My turn, ‘5’.”

“‘6’.”

“‘7’ then.”

“…‘8’.”

The game continued smoothly. Nobody called doubt on me when I called ‘9’ and threw ‘Jack’.

As the game progressed, the cards started to accumulate, and the pressure that came was even greater.

Also, as of now,

‘’’Me: 13 cards, Yuuji: 9 cards, Hideyoshi: 9 cards, Muttsurini: 10 cards, center: 11 cards.’’’

At this point, if someone’s lie was seen through, he has to take 11 cards, and if someone failed in calling doubt, he will take 11 cards too. This made us unable to take action simply.

“…‘3’.”

After I called ‘King’, Yuuji called ‘Ace’, Hideyoshi called ‘2’, and Muttsurini silently threw ‘3’. Now, it’s my turn to call ‘4’…this is bad. I didn’t expect this round to last this long. Now I have to call ‘4’ when I don’t even have one—nn?

“? What’s wrong, Akihisa?”

“No, it’s nothing.”

Looking closely at my hands, I do have a ‘4’ after all. Maybe it’s because I didn’t see it since there were too many cards stuck between. How lucky.

“Here, ‘4’.”

“…Muu…”

Hideyoshi flinched, and the mouth that was slightly opened shut itself again. It seems that he didn’t intend on calling doubt. Even though he may be thinking that I was lying, my movements weren’t unnatural at all, so he wouldn’t dare to take action so quickly. Hideyoshi can really observe the changes in other people’s expressions.

“Akihisa, doubt.”

At this moment, Yuuji, who was beside me, called doubt. Under different situations, this guy’s relies more on logic than instincts. Maybe he felt that I didn’t have a ‘4’ in my hand because I was caught just now. Fufu, you big idiot!

“PRESENT FOR YOU!”

“WA! NO WAY!”

Yuuji reached out and opened the top most card that was face down. There’s nothing to say, that was a real ‘4’ of diamonds. Now Yuuji has to take more than 10 cards now.

“Damn it, this guy’s an idiot and yet he could still come up with tricks like that. Looks like you were setting bait at the first round, right?”

Yuuji murmured and kept the cards in the center.

Now, the number of cards in our hands changed.

‘’’Me: 12 cards, Yuuji: 22 cards, Hideyoshi: 9 cards, Muttsurini, 9 cards. Center: none.’’’

Right now, the situation is like this.

Let’s talk about something rather useless. After the game ended, Yuuji told me that he already had three ‘4’s in his hand, so once I bluffed in the beginning, he deduced that I didn’t have any ‘4’ in my hand. As for the others, even if they had a ‘4’ in their hands, he couldn’t take too much risk, so he would call doubt when I threw the card.

“Nice going, Akihisa. You nearly fooled me too.”

“…You’ve grown.”

Right now, how can I say that I didn’t notice the ‘4’ in my hand in the first place.

“Either way, I don’t want to be the loser. I’m broke this month. ‘10’!”

“I’m on a tight budget too. I definitely can’t lose to you guys. ‘Jack’.”

“…‘Queen’.”

Muttsurini stealthily threw his card out.

“Muttsurini, doubt.”

“…Damn it.”

On hearing Yuuji call doubt, Muttsurini could only keep the cards in the center back into his hand. Yuuji had so many cards, so he should have 4 ‘Queens’, right? I have to take note of that.”

After that, the game started as Muttsurini called ‘Ace’.

The game then continued.

Hideyoshi’s cards started to reduce one by one, and now, he had only 4 cards left. I’m next with 6 cards, and Yuuji and Muttsurini have so many cards that they didn’t look like there’s any difference.

“I call ‘3’.”

As Hideyoshi threw this card, there are 9 cards in the center. If these cards end

up with Hideyoshi, I'll definitely be the winner, but if I'm not careful, these cards may end up in my hand, and I'll have to fight for last place with Yuuji and Muttsurini. In that case, Hideyoshi will have only 3 cards in his hand, and he would definitely consider hard before throwing the next card. Thus, now's the time to decide the winner. What do I do now?

""…""

Yuuji and Muttsurini were hesitating if they should be calling doubt. If they let Hideyoshi go now, they'll definitely lose, but once they fail, they'll be in last place.

"Muttsurini, it's your turn to call '4'."

"…'4'."

As Hideyoshi prompted him, Muttsurini, who was still hesitation, hurriedly threw his card. Uu, that move was too strong! Anyone would throw the card out when they're prompted at this moment.

"…Muu!"

Beside me, Yuuji gave a 'we've been had' look. In such a situation, the winner would be decided.

"I'm '5' then."

I threw a '5' of hearts. Even if Hideyoshi wins this round, I'll take second place, and at least I don't have to treat them.

"I'm '6'.'

Yuuji called his own number and threw the card in his hand. Looking at things now, Muttsurini, who was in last place, didn't move at all. Maybe he's wondering whether Hideyoshi had a '7' in his hand. Hideyoshi wouldn't act rashly, and would likely choose to maintain the current ranking.

However, just when Hideyoshi was about to threw the final card,

"Eh? Akihisa-kun and everyone's still in class?"

Himeji-san suddenly walked into the classroom, and she seemed to be holding something. I don't know what she just went to do.

"Himeji-san, you didn't go back with Minami?"

"No. Sensei asked me to help, so I was delayed till so late."

Himeji-san smiled as she explained. It's troublesome to help a teacher, but she didn't look troubled at all. Himeji-san's really a kind and understanding girl.

"And sensei even gave me chocolates as reward. Everyone, want some?"

Himeji-san opened the box in front of us. Since she most likely agreed to help, sensei was so nice to her. When Yuuji and I (were forced to) help, we never got any reward.

"Thanks. Then please wait until we play this game, okay?"

"Okay…oh yeah, what are you playing?"

"Ahh, we're playing doubt, with bets on,"

Before we could even finish, I sense some movements on the corridor. This humid, humid and pressuring feeling…is that Ironman?

The other 3 who noticed the enemy's presence also gave me a warning look. It'll be bad if Ironman knew that we were playing poker cards, and that's what they're telling me with their eyes.

"A betting…game? What did you bet on?"

"Of, of course it's not about money. Eh, it's more about a penalty game, and that's…"

For a moment, I couldn't find any good excuse at all as I stuttered while I spoke.

Let me think…no betting, entertaining, and a penalty game that can be controlled until it's not that cruel…

"We're playing a penalty game where 'the loser takes off two pieces of clothing, and the second-last will take off one'."

“SOMEONE CALL THE AMBULANCE! MUTTSURINI’S DROWNING IN A POOL OF BLOOD!!”

Hideyoshi’s dangerous words immediately caused Muttsurini to fall to the edge of death.

“Take, taking off clothes…that won’t do! This penalty game’s too unhealthy!”

Though there’s no betting of money, taking off clothes didn’t seem right too. Ironman didn’t seem like he intended to enter the classroom, but this penalty game’s not too good. Did Hideyoshi misjudge?

“Why are you panicking, Himeji? Even if this penalty method isn’t worth praising, this little penalty isn’t worth being mindful about, right? Either way, I’m a real man after all “““DOUBT, HIDEYOSHI!!!!””” WAIT A MINUTE! WHY ARE YOU DUMPING ALL YOUR CARDS TO ME!?”

Now, Hideyoshi has 15 cards, and the winner can’t be decided now.

“An, anyway, we’re not betting money, and it’s not some unhealthy penalty. It’s just a simple poker card game. There shouldn’t be any problems, right?”

“Bu, but…”

Himeji-san still didn’t seem to agree.

It couldn’t be helped that she would feel this way. Even if everyone here is recorded to be a male, but Himeji-san, who treats everything seriously, obviously can’t possibly accept that we’re playing strip poker.

“But, Akihisa-kun’s interested in nude male bodies…”

“DOUBT!! HIMEJI-SAN, DOUBT!! OI, HIDEYOSHI! WHY ARE YOU THROWING THE CARDS HERE!? WHAT’S WRONG WITH ME CALLING DOUBT!?”

“Give it up, HIdeyoshi. These cards belonged to you once you were called doubt. When Akihisa threw his card, there wasn’t any new cards out at the center, so it’s pointless to call doubt now.”

“WAIT A MINUTE, YUUJI! DID YOU JUST AGREE WITH WHAT HIMEJI-SAN SAID IN A ROUNDABOUT MANNER!?”

These baseless and negative rumors spread out like this. Really, why do they think that I’m interested in guys?

“But, but, I still think that this penalty game’s bad…”

“No, no, no, things aren’t as bad as what you think.”

“That’s right. This level of penalty is rather common to us guys.”

“Everyone’s all guys. It’s alright if we’re not completely naked.”

“EHH!? WHEN DID EVERYONE COME BACK TO CLASS!?”

On hearing that someone was going to strip, unknowingly, everyone from F class gathered inside the classroom silently. Even the firemen who were specially trained would definitely be amazed by our unique gathering ability.

“YOSHII! I’LL LOOK DOWN ON YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IF YOU DARE TO LOSE!”

“SAKAMOTO, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN THIS EASILY, RIGHT!?”

“MUTTSURINI, IT’S JUST A FEW DROPS OF NOSEBLEED, DON’T LOSE! YOUR ABILITY SHOULDN’T BE JUST LIKE THIS, RIGHT!?”

Everyone was hoping for Hideyoshi to lose. To prevent the game from ending because of an accident, some students even formed a life-saving team and transfused blood into Muttsurini. How trained are they?

“NO NO! I SAID NO, NO MEANS NO! AKIHISA-KUN, STOP PLAYING AND HAVE SOME CHOCOLATE!”

To prevent our card game from continuing, Himeji-san deliberately changed the topic, opened the chocolate, and popped a piece into her mouth.

“Akihisa-kun, this chocolate’s really nice. You should try some…he….”

At this moment, Himeji-san suddenly went silent. What’s wrong? Was that box of chocolate bad?

“““CONTINUE! CONTINUE! CONTINUE”””

Everyone shouted out in unison, requesting for the game to continue.

Perhaps affected by this presence, Hideyoshi called “ha, ‘8’.” And threw the card out. Hideyoshi was used to lots of pressure on the performing stage, so for him to be this panicky, anyone can tell that the boys of F class are so perverted and horrifying.

“…‘9’.”

“I’m ‘10’ then.”

“’Jack’.”

“Then, I’m ‘Queen’.”

“Hideyoshi, doubt.”

At this moment, Yuuji caught Hideyoshi cheating. Right now, Yuuji had four ‘Queen’s in his hands, and it’s Yuuji’s hands, and it’s extremely important to be careful now. Unexpectedly though, Hideyoshi started from ‘8’. It seemed that this tremendous pressure rattled him.

Right now, the number of cards we have is as followed: me, 4 cards, Yuuji, 14 cards, Hideyoshi, 18 cards, and Muttsurini, 16 cards. I have the least cards, and Hideyoshi’s in last.

“KINOSHITA’S LAST! IS HE GOING TO TAKE OFF TWO CLOTHINGS!? HE’S GOING TO GO HALF-NAKED!?”

“DON’T LOSE, YOSHII! CHARGE TO THE FINISH LINE!”

“GO YOSHII! GO YOSHII!”

Once I throw in two more cards, I’ll definitely win this game, and Hideyoshi will end up having to take off two pieces of clothing. It’s to be expected that the atmosphere was this intense.”

“Mu, mu…”

Hideyoshi couldn’t help but moan. Looking at things now, he will lose, and because he knew that, he gave such a painful look.

“Can’t be helped then…since we’re all guys, even if you want me to take off two pieces of clothing…”

Hideyoshi murmured as he prepared his cards. At this moment—

“…(Thud).”

Hideyoshi collapsed onto the floor lifelessly. What happened?

“Ara ara, Kinoshita-san must be tired now.”

Himeji-san stood at where Hideyoshi was standing, holding a small handkerchief.

‘Tired’? She basically knocked Hideyoshi unconscious in a very suspicious manner…

“Really, since Kinoshita-san fell asleep, I’ll play the remaining game.”

Himeji-san gently picked up the unconscious Hideyoshi and even took a seat for him to lie down. That action’s really gentle…

“Oi, oi, Himeji, did your handkerchief have some drug on it?”

“No, Kinoshita-san was too tired.”

“Bu, but Hideyoshi was okay just now.”

“No, Kinoshita-san was too tired.”

As Himeji-san answered us just now, I seem to see a dead sea in her eyes.

Yuuji and I felt some uncomfortable sweat on our backs. Muttsurini twitched his nose and muttered,

“This sweet smell…trichloro—”

Swoosh—DONK.

“Ara ara, Tsuchiya-kun must be tired now.”

““MUTTSURINI!!!””

As she spoke halfway, Himeji-san’s handkerchief fluttered in mid-air, and that short moment destroyed Muttsurini’s consciousness. That handkerchief’s really dangerous!

“Really, let alone Tsuchiya-kun, Kinoshita-kun’s definitely tired. Wanting to strip in front of Akihisa-kun? That’s not something a normal person would do.”

“No…I think Himeji-san now is even weirder.”

If it were the normal Himeji-san, she’ll definitely not do that, right? I can’t tell

what happened that caused her to do suchy a thing.

Suddenly, I glanced at the packaging of the chocolate box. The box had the large words ‘Bonn Whiskey’.

Oh, Bonn Whiskey…I seem to have heard of that before—wait, Bonn Whiskey!? Isn’t that something that has whiskey inside, right? That means Himeji-san’s drunk, right?”

“Akihisa-kun, what’s wrong?”

As she asked, Himeji-san grabbed another whiskey chocolate and put it into her mouth. Her face was completely red. I’m definitely right. The reason why Himeji-san couldn’t control herself must be because of that box of chocolate (with whiskey inside).

Since things ended up like this, it’ll be really bad on many different levels if the game continued. Should I ask that we end this game now?

“Eh, nothing. Speaking of which, since Muttsurini’s asleep now, there’s only 3 people left. This game can’t continue, so I think we might as well end this game —”

“End? Akihisa-kun, what are you saying? Aren’t there 4 people?”

“Eh?”

“…I’ll do my best.”

“Shouko! When did you…”

Muttsurini’s seat was taken by Kirishima-san out of a sudden. What’s going on!?

“…It’s a wife’s duty to forcefully strip a husband off his clothes.”

“Ahh damn it! I don’t know how to even comment about that.”

The participants changed, and unknowingly, this game of doubt ended up with me, Yuuji, Himeji-san and Kirishima-san as the participants.

Glancing at each other because of their sudden appearance, Yuuji and I looked

mystified, and Himeji-san and Kirishima-san just sat on their seats and started talking.

“Ah, Shouko-chan, do you want some chocolate?”

“…Thank you.”

““ARRGGHHHH!!””

Before we could even stop them, Himeji-san passed the chocolate to Kirishima-san.

“…It’s nice.”

“It’s great that you like it. Please have as much as you want.”

“…Un.”

The first chocolate disappeared into Kirishima-san’s mouth. As expected of a girl, she didn’t resist the sweets at all. It’s not a bad thing to like sweets, but…

“Eh, Kirishima, are you alright?”

I timidly asked.

The problem’s with the alcohol in the chocolate. Though the chocolate doesn’t have too much alcohol, eating lots of it will increase the drunk feeling. Besides, the whiskey that in the chocolate is a powerful alcohol. Don’t tell me Kirishima-san’s drunk…

“…Alright? What do you mean?”

“No, well, that chocolate, it should have some alcohol inside it, right?”

On hearing my words, Kirishima-san nodded her head slightly and said,

“…It’s alright. The alcohol content of whiskey is only 40%. If this chocolate has 40% alcohol, it will only fill up 0.07% of my blood, so there won’t be any problems.”

“Is, is that so? That’s good.”

As expected of the valedictorian, she really counted it too quickly. She's definitely not drunk,

"…This isn't like the smart Yoshii I know, not being able to calculate such an easy thing."

""SHE'S A LOST CAUSE!!!""

SHE'S DRUNK! KIRISHIMA-SAN'S DRUNK!

(What do we do now, Yuuji? The situation now looks really dangerous!)

(Even if you ask me, I…)

I kept my voice down and whispered to Yuuji.

The rules of this game had now become such that the loser has to strip. Never mind that this was a proposal Hideyoshi just mentioned, for some reason, Himeji-san and Kirishima-san were sitting at the table. This penalty's really intimidating, and besides, we're being watched by those guys from F class.

(Can't be helped. Let's hurry up and make them lose this game and end it before they strip.)

(Yeah. It's better to win this and end this.)

When they need to face the (stripping) penalty, they will regain their senses because of shame. Once they regain their senses, it won't be too difficult to ask them to stop.

Okay. Since it's decided, let's go!

"Himeji-san, doubt!"

"Too bad, Akihisa-kun."

"Shouko, doubt."

"…Wrong."

"Himeji-san, you're definitely lying!"

“I didn’t lie.”

“This must be a doubt, Shouko!”

“…I’m always honest.”

NOT OVER YET!!

“Akihisa-kun, doubt.”

“Uuu….”

“…Yuuji, doubt.”

“HOW DID YOU KNOW!”

““…”” Psst, our clothing were taken off one by one.”

“Akihisa-kun, those are socks. You’re too sneaky.”

“…Yuuji, using a tie to sneak by, are you a man?”

We’re only left with our T-shirts, pants and boxers, and now, we’re finally backed into a corner.

“Yoshii and Sakamoto alone can’t beat Kirishima and Himeji…”

“it’ll just be a waste of time to continue watching this game…”

“How about we head to the playground on our way there?”

Our classmates from F class, who were looking forward to seeing Kirishima-san and Himeji-san strip, muttered and left once they saw their overwhelming abilities. That’s true, even if they stay, they’ll just see Yuuji and me being completely embarrassed. No maniac would be so interested in seeing such a

thing.

That’s right! Even if we strip, there’s no benefit at all! It’s better to end this game now!

“Himeji-san, well…shouldn’t we end now?”

“What are you saying, Akihisa-kun? Now’s the main course.”

“Shouko, that’s enough, isn’t it?”

“…I want more.”

No way! They have no intention of stopping at all!

“But Akihisa-kun, it’s alright if you don’t want to strip, you know?”

“Eh?”

“If you really don’t want to strip—”

“I DIDN’T SEE IT! I DIDN’T SEE HIMEJI-SAN TAKE OUT THAT GIRL’S UNIFORM FROM THE BAG! HOW CAN THAT HARDWORKING AND DILIGENT HIMEJI-SAN ASK ME TO DO SUCH A THING! THAT’S IMPOSSIBLE!”

The situation gradually got out of hand. If I knew this was going to happen, I might as well let Ironman find out that we were betting money with cards and let him tell us off.

“Fufu, this is all your fault, Akihisa-kun. You wouldn’t stop no matter how many times I told you to stop.”

Himeji-san said this as she shuffled the cards.

“Okay, and now, it’s time to continue to the next game.”

Am I thinking too much? For some reason, I find that Himeji-san’s actions are much more alert than usual when she’s drunk.

☆

Himeji-san continued to deal the cards, and the curtains of this poker card game ‘strip doubt’ started again.

Right now, I have only a pair of boxers, pants, and T-shirt on. Let alone shoes, I already got my 2 socks removed. It’s now dangerous mode.

(Akihisa, now that it ended up like this, we have to do whatever it takes.)

Yuuji, who’s stripped as badly as I am, whispered to me. He glanced at my bag.

(Are we going to do it?)

(No other way.)

Yuuji’s right. We have far few clothing now, and the situation’s getting out of hand. Can’t be helped. If it were an ordinary bet, we wouldn’t stoop so low, but now’s not an ordinary bet! We have to do this to protect ourselves even if we don’t want to. Okay, let’s begin!

(Akihisa, let’s begin.)

(Okay Yuuji.)

To match the movements, both of us glanced at each other…now!

“Oh my…”

Yuuji’s cards accidentally dropped onto the table, and Himeji-san and Kirishima-san’s cards landed onto the table as well. Good! They’re distracted!

I quickly reached out for another deck of identical cards from my bag. To make it easy to take action, I hid the other deck in my pocket—

PAK!

“Akihisa-kun, you’re playing dirty.”

“HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE!!!“””

Just when I was ready to hide my cards into my pocket, Himeji-san suddenly grabbed my hand even when she wasn’t looking at me. How is that possible! How did this happen!

“You two did mess up, right? It’s understandable if Akihisa-kun dropped the cards, but how can Sakamoto-kun possibly make such a simple mistake of dropping the cards onto the table when the game’s going on?”

“…Too naïve.”

As she said this, Kirishima-san showed something she was holding in her hand to us. That’s…a makeup mirror? Did they see through Yuuji and me attempting to cheat, and used the mirror to watch our actions?

“You two just love to play pranks.”

“…Feisty bad kids.”

On catching Yuuji and me cheating, Himeji-san and Kirishima-san didn’t blame us as they smirked. That’s scary! They’re really scary when they look like this!

“Then, I’ll start. ‘Ace’.”

As if nothing happened, Himeji-san continued the game again. It was just a minor trip-up, so it was alright after a little adjustment.

“…‘2’.”

Kirishima-san said this and threw the ‘2’ that’s face up. I then threw a ‘3’ that’s face down…under such a pressuring atmosphere, this game continued.

“Akihisa-kun, doubt.”

“Yes…”

“…Yuuji, doubt.”

“Why do I feel that we just couldn’t win…”

As the game progressed, we again realized that they’re really smart. After dealing the cards, they seemed to have remembered what cards they had, and when they should throw their cards. Also, they knew who picked up the cards that were thrown, and how many cards there were for which number.

“Shouko, that ‘3’ was a bluff, right?”

“…Un.”

Occasionally, Yuuji and I could have correct calls, like when we have all four cards of the same number in the hand, but that’s what they expected, right? As for why, it’s because when they were called doubt, there wasn’t many cards at the center. They made us call doubt when there wasn’t many causes, and it seemed that they could understand what we were thinking and crushed us easily.

“Then, ‘7’.”

Himeji-san said as she threw the card to the center.

Now she has 5 cards in her hand, and Kirishima-san also has 5 cards in her hand. Yuuji and I have about the same number of cards, and it’s now time to take action. But if we fail to call doubt correctly here, it’ll be a tragedy now. What should we do…

Just when I was hesitating about what to do, a familiar voice rang in my ears.

(She’s lying, Yoshii-kun.)

Does this voice belong to Kubo-san? Did Kubo-san become one of the onlookers here?

(Thank you, Kubo-san! You’re the only one on my side!)

(No, no need to thank me, Yoshii-kun.)

After Kubo-san reminded me, I deliberately covered my mouth to thank Kubo-san without letting the rest now.

Even when those guys from our class murmured and left unhappily, he stayed here to watch the game because he was worried about me. Why is Kubo-san so good to me? Thank you! You've given me a chance to revive. I'll definitely live this life well!

I take a deep breath, and declared loudly as I pointed at the card Himeji-san thrw out,

"THAT '7'S A DOUBT!"

"Sorry, this card's really '7'."

"KUBO-SAANNN!!"

"SORRY, YOSHII-KUN!"

Kubo-san hurriedly ran to the corridor, but still hid behind the door and watched our actions in the classroom, even holding onto a camera. WHAT IN THE WORLD IS KUBO-SAN THINKING!

(Akihisa, you bastard! What in the world did you do!?)

(But, that's the suggestion the ranked 2 Kubo-san gave me. Wouldn't anyone normally trust him?)

(DON'T TRUST THAT GUY! THAT GUY'S OUR ENEMY WHEN WE SAID THAT THE BET'S STRIPPING CLOTHES!)

Ku…! Either way, Kubo-san's from A class, so he would naturally side with Kirishima-san instead of me…

Just when Yuuji and I were whispering to each other, Himeji-san suddenly said carelessly,

"Well, I'm feeling really complicated in this situation…"

And she sounded really bothered.

On hearing what Himeji-san said, I couldn't help but empathize with what she's feeling now.

As a member of F class, she would definitely feel conflicted since she often fought alongside us. No, the kind and understanding Himeji-san would never want to play such a cruel penalty game. She just want to play the game, but the game has a penalty behind it. She doesn't want to lose, but she's hesitating over whether she should penalize her classmates. She's bounded in her heart—

"From tomorrow onwards, the Akihisa-kun I'm familiar with will become the internet idol 'Aki-chan', and then he'll be further from me…"

"HOLD IT, HIMEJI-SAN! I NEVER AGREED TO WEARING GIRL'S OUTFIT OR TAKE PHOTOS THAT'S TO BE UPLOADED!!"

WHO! WHO GAVE THOSE DAMNED CHOCOLATES TO HIMEJI-SAN! SHE WOULD SAY SUCH SCARY STUFF WHEN DRUNK! THAT'S RIGHT! SHE'S DRUNK, SO THOSE…THOSE WEREN'T HER TRUE WORDS! I MUST THINK OF IT LIKE THAT!"

"Really…Himeji, that's really troubling. Don't you say, Shouko?"

"…Un. If it makes the other party ashamed, we should think from the other side's point of view."

Kirishima-san's words seemed to take a huge load off Yuuji's heart. As Kirishima-san's not drunk, she could still think that way.

"…So Yuuji."

"What is it, Shouko?"

"…If you're feeling ashamed when you take the penalty—it's alright to close your eyes."

"SHUT UP, YOU IDIOT!!!"

The topic has already changed to our penalty game. I, no, we haven't admitted defeat yet! If we work hard to win here, they might not want to take off their

clothes and will suggest ending this game! We still have hope!”

“Oh yes, Akihisa-kun.”

“Wha, what is it?”

“Even if I have to take off my last piece of clothing, I don’t intend to end this game halfway through~”

SHE’S COMPLETELY MESSED UP!!!

“Shouko, you—”

“…I’m rather confident of the underwear I’m wearing today.”

“Not good…these girls aren’t hesitating over taking off their clothes at all!”

Why are these two manlier than us guys!? Girls would normally not want to let others see their underwear, right!?

“Unbelievable…normally, I wouldn’t feel anything about having to take off my boxers…”

“Un…but we just don’t feel like taking them off when they’re enthusiastically waiting for us to take off our clothes…”

On the other hand, Yuuji and I, the two guys, are feeling completely apprehensive about having to take off our clothes for some reason. That’s really strange. Everything just feels really weird.

“Hurry up. It’s now Akihisa-kun’s turn.”

As Himeji-san prompted me, I could only prepare to throw the card in my hand. Yuuji got four ‘3’s. In other words, once Himeji-san calls ‘3’, I can make her take those cards.

—If possible, it should be alright…!

(Eh, I don’t even have an ‘Ace’…!)

(Damn it, I don’t have a ‘Jack’ here…!)

After we glanced at each other, I found that Yuuji had three ‘Aces’ in his hand, and I had three ‘Jacks’ in my hand. Here we go again…!

To set Himeji-san up, we have to make her call ‘3’ no matter what, but even so, I have to get an ‘Ace’. But I don’t have ‘Ace’ in my hand, so I’ll definitely be called doubt. And then, Himeji-san or Kirishima-san will realize the fact that I was bluffing. So we can’t make Himeji-san call ‘3’ either way. Also, all the cards will end up in my hand.

Other than that, I really want to know what cards Yuuji has…

“Akihisa-kun, how can you continue to look at Sakamoto-kun? That’s not right.”

Himeji-san’s is smiling as she’s exerting pressure on me, causing me to be unable to deliver my message to Yuuji properly. Seems like she has already seen through our tricks.

“The, then, ‘5’…”

In the end, to make Himeji-san call ‘Jack’, which I have three of, I could only choose to throw ‘5’. Damn it, this isn’t good!

“‘6’!”

“I’m ‘7’ then.”

“…‘8’.”

Himeji-san and Kirishima-san didn’t even have many cards in their hands, but for some reason, I feel that the cards they threw were real. Eh? Hold it, why am I thinking this way? Am I losing to them psychologically?

“Then…‘9’!”

To get rid of this bad feeling, I deliberately increased my volume. Yuuji then called ‘10’, and it’s now Himeji-san’s turn to call ‘Jack’.

“I’m ‘Jack’ then.”

Himeji-san threw the card to the center. Now she has the final three cards left. Though I can't confirm if Himeji-san's bluffing, but it'll be over if we don't settle it here. Can't be helped. No matter what, I can only console myself that Kirishima-san has the last 'Jack' and doubt Himeji-san—

(Wait, Akihisa!)

Just when I was ready to call out, Yuuji stopped me. What's going on?

(Watch it, Akihisa. Himeji's just a bait. I think the one they really wanted to protect is Shouko…!)

After Yuuji reminded me, I suddenly realized. Himeji-san doesn't have many cards left, but Kirishima-san has only 4 cards left. Even if Himeji-san has to keep all the cards in this round, it would only let her have 10 cards in her hand. On the other hand, Yuuji and I will have a complete defeat, and she will be second in this game. To Himeji-san and Kirishima-san, this would be the best outcome. If I call doubt on Himeji-san, Himeji-san will start the next round, and she will definitely start the next round with a number that's beneficial to Kirishima-san!

(Ah, that was dangerous! Thanks Yuuji.)

(That's nothing. We've been losing, but who can stand having to lose so many consecutive times…!)

It seem that they don't mind as long as our eyes aren't indicating anything about the cards. Himeji-san didn't say much as she just waited silently for me to declare doubt on her.

"Akihisa-kun, Sakamoto-kun, is this really alright?"

"Ahh, it's alright."

Ignoring Himeji-san's reminder, it's finally Kirishima-san's turn to call. The reason Himeji-san asked this is most likely Yuuji's guess wasn't too far off.

"Oi, Shouko, your turn to call 'Queen'."

Yuuji prompted. Most likely, he wanted to call doubt on Kirishima-san when she

throws the card out.

“…”

Kirishima-san held onto the card, but didn’t move.

I see. Himeji-san was acting as bait because Kirishima-san didn’t have any ‘Queens’. That was a close shave. We were nearly fooled by them, and nearly lost the game.

In contrast to Yuuji, who saw through their plans and believed in his own victory, Kirishima-san didn’t move at all as she said.

“…Sakamoto Yuuji is.”

“? What are you going to say?”

Is she going to set a trap? Yuuji naturally braced himself.

“…Sakamoto Yuuji likes girls more than guys, and is a healthy young high schooler.”

“Doutt!?”

Yuuji was instantly speechless.

This, this is way too sly! How can Yuuji call ‘doubt’ when she said this? If we’re not careful, it’ll just end up with some weird negative rumor!

If Yuuji can’t say it, I have to say it for him. Even if I doubt that Yuuji’s a healthy young man, it wouldn’t hurt me anyway.

To call doubt on Kirishima-san, I deliberately took a deep breath.

“Okay, it’s Akihisa-kun’s turn to call ‘King’!”

“Eh? Ah, un.”

Himeji-san smiled kindly as she prompted me, and I just answered blankly.

Eh? I can’t answer at this moment! What stupid thing did this idiot here do! Now

I have to throw the next card without calling doubt on Kirishima-san!

“Eh, I, I didn’t mean that just now.”

I hurriedly tried to correct the mistake I made a second back.

“Then I’ll say it, when Akihisa-kun throws the next card, I’ll call ‘King’ is doubt.”

Himeji-san said that without holding back. This, this move’s way too powerful! Now I have to put the card now. That sentence alone forced the situation into my hand. Now it’s too late for me to call doubt on Kirishima-san.

“Uu, ‘King’…”

I wanted to cry as I threw the ‘King’ in my hand. After Himeji-san flipped the card open to check the number, she kept the cards wordlessly.

“My turn to start, ‘5’.”

“…‘6’.”

And the most cruel thing was that Kirishima-san got away.

“Shouko, doubt.”

“…Wrong.”

As it was the last card, Yuuji could only call doubt on her, but the card she threw definitely had the number ‘6’ written on it. Now this game is over. Kirishima-san’s first, Himeji-san’s second, I’m third and Yuuji’s last.

“Too bad, Akihisa-kun’s third, so he only needs to take off one piece of clothing.”

“…Yuuji needs to take off two.”

Himeji-san and Kirishima-san looked at Yuuji and me expectantly. This feeling’s way too weird…

“Damn it! We’re guys! We don’t need to feel ashamed!”

“That’s right, Akihisa! It’s just taking off one, two pieces of clothing. Just treat it as if we’re swimming!”

As we said this, we took off our clothes. I became naked on top, and Yuuji’s only left with the boxers.

“Ah, Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto-kun must have trained hard…”

“…How firm.”

Forget about Yuuji, the reason why I give the impression that my body’s rather sturdy is likely because of the lack of nutrition…

Himeji-san seems shocked, but it seems that she’s somewhat awake now. Really…it’s because Himeji-san couldn’t hold her liquor that it ended up like this…

“Yuuji…let’s not play trump with Himeji-san and Kirishima-san…”

“Ahh…I don’t want to suffer this ridiculous humiliation again…”

Yuuji and I sighed hard and regretted our actions. We were really foolish to take these two as our enemies…

But just as I reached my hand out to take the clothes that were taken off and put aside, Himeji-san kept the poker cards on the table and said softly with a slightly flushed look,

“In, in that case, I can finally strip Akihisa-kun fully in the next game.”

“…My heart’s racing.”

““YOU TWO AREN’T STOPPING!!!???””

☆

“RUN, AKIHISA! THEY’LL CATCH US IF THIS KEEPS UP!”

“I GOT IT! DAMN IT! WHY MUST HIMEJI-SAN BE SO FAST IN SUCH A SITUATION!”

“Mu…Yoshii, Sakamoto!? Didn’t I tell you to stop running on the corri—dor…huh?”

“AH! IRONMAN! PLEASE! PLEASE SAVE US!”

“PLEASE! THE REMEDIAL CLASS OR ANYWHERE WILL DO! PLEASE SAVE US!!”

“You two…are not even wearing your uniforms. What’s going on…”

“WE’LL EXPLAIN LATER! HURRY UP AND TAKE US AWAY!”

“THAT’S RIGHT! TAKE US AWAY! EVEN IF WE HAVE TO TAKE REMEDIAL—OWAAAHHHH! THEY’RE HERE!!!”

“Akihisa-kun, please wait! You haven’t put on the girl’s uniform yet!”

“…Yuuji, you haven’t taken off your last piece of clothing.”

““PLEASE SAVE US, NISHIMURA-SENSEI!!””

“Really, you two…what did you do that caused you into such an embarrassing situation?”

☆

‘’’~2-D’s Tamano Miki-san’s eyewitness account~’’’

“Yes, that’s right. After school, I accidentally met an almost completely naked Aki-ch—Yoshii-kun and Sakamoto-kun when I walked on the corridor, begging

Nishimura-sensei hungrily…I was really shocked, so I subconsciously took my camera up and shot that image…”

On the school newspaper that was published by the newspaper club, the headlines had a photo of Yuuji and me half-naked. This report created a lot of horrifying rumors in school.

This humiliation…we’ll never forget about it…!

TETSUJIN

TETSUJIN: I’ll try my best to answer every student's problems.

I'LL TRY MY BEST TO ANSWER EVERY STUDENT'S PROBLEMS.

S-moto Y-ji-san's troubles.

Ironman-sensei, please listen to my troubles.

My mother really lacks common sense, and doesn't have any ability to survive at all. To be specific, she just couldn't differ between Lobsters and Crayfish before serving them, and would sometimes even mix up coffee with noodle sauce. How can I teach my mom common sense of this world?

Tekken-sensei's Suggestion

Sorry. This is the first time a student asked me this. To be honest, I really don't know how to answer. In fact, I would like to ask everyone how to teach common sense to educate a certain group of uncouth students in our class. Really, speaking of those guys, no matter how much I lectured them--no, don't worry, this trivial thing has nothing to do with you.

Back to the main point, in regards to your problem...every time your mother goes out of line, I guess the best way is to be patient and correct her mistakes one by one. Common sense is about surviving in this society. With a little more

time, I suppose she would remember. As the saying goes 'haste won't do the job'. Instead of trying to correct her way of living at one go, it's better to educate her to the ways of this world slowly. It's really tought, but sensei hope that you can do your best.

Y-shi A-hisa-san's troubles.

Ironman-sensei, please listen to me. I have an older sister, and I'm really bothered that she has no common sense at all. Specifically, she would walk around in a bathrobe on the road because 'she's all sweaty', and even intended to kiss her little brother here with 'a kiss that makes me unable to marry'. She even told my friends 'I love my little brother as someone of the opposite gender'. Sensei, what should I do to teach this older sister of mine common sense?

Tekken-sensei's Suggestion

To be honest, I hope that you can teach me what to do. Why is it that all the troubles sent here are way different from the troubles I know students should have? I'm about to lose my confidence as an educator. If I receive such doubts

and troubles like this, I might want to end this bulletin--no, I'm sorry. I shouldn't be complaining here, so please forget what I just said.

As for your troubles, why don't you talk it through with your older sister? Maybe she didn't even view you as her own younger brother. Under such a situation, it's best to clarify the situation.

K-bo Y-mitsu-san's problems.

Ironman-sensei, I found a pillow with a certain male student's photo printed on it in my hardworking older brother's room. Please save me.

Tekken-sensei's Suggestion

- As Nishimura-sensei suddenly resigned from this position, this bulletin will end here.
- Thanks to everyone for your love and support.

Me and Real Motive and Summoned Beast

僕とホンネと
召喚獣

“Haha, that’s really a masterpiece.”

“What’s the matter, principal?”

“Ahh, Takahashi-sensei. I was just trying out some changes in the controls of the summoning system.”

“Are you talking about the control system?”

“I’m trying to let it remain in semi-automated mode. If the settings up till now can be said to ready the controller’s consciousness, this will read the conscious and unconscious states of the controller, and will act independently to a certain extent. It can act according to what it wants.”

“Conscious and unconscious states…that’s the subconscious state, right?”

“It’s somewhat different from what Frued said about the subconscious state, but that’s about it.”

“I see.”

“Don’t worry too much about the psychological definition. Anyway, because of the changes in the controls, the summons’ actions have become interesting.”

“Interesting?”

“Yes, they got interesting. No matter what, I want to summon the summoned beasts and collect some data.”

“I don’t really understand, but if you just want to collect data, I can help out.”

“No. In this experimental phase, your score’s too great. I’ll be troubled if there’s any mishaps.”

“Do you want me to get a lower score?”

“I don’t mind, but after you get a low score, you need to take another test to get it back to normal. Wouldn’t that be too troublesome?”

“It’s not troublesome, but it’s a bit inefficient.”

“Right? Instead of that, we might as well—”

“AKIHISA YOU IDIOT! WHY DID YOU SNEEZE AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT MOMENT! WASN’T IT ALRIGHT UNTIL THE MOMENT YOU SNEEZED, YOU BIG IDIOT!?”

“AREN’T YOU THE SAME AS WELL, YUUJI! YOUR STOMACH RUMBLED LIKE THAT! WHAT WERE YOU THINKING! WASN’T EVERYTHING ALRIGHT BEFORE YOU MADE THAT NOISE!? YOU FILTHY BASTARD!!”

“THAT’S ENOUGH YOU TWO! HURRY UP AND GET BACK TO REMEDIAL!”

““DAAAMNNNNNN IIIIIITTTTTTTT!!!””

“—We might as well use those low scores idiots to test this out. That’ll be more efficient.”

“I see. So that’s what you were planning.”

“““Summoning test?”””

“Yes. I want you people to test this out.”

On a certain day as summer vacation was about to end, after F class' special remedial (on a side note, Kirishima-san attended this on her own will) ended, we were talking about the photos we took when we went to the beach, and the principal suddenly walked into the classroom and told us that.

Summoning test...

“Why us?”

Minami asked the principal as she kept the photos on the table.

“What do you mean by that? It's because you people are most suited to test it. Your scores aren't too high, and you're adept at controlling your summoned beasts, right? Besides—”

“Besides?”

“—This can be considered punishment for a few certain idiots who tried to run away from remedial classes.”

““...(looks away)””

As the topic was suddenly turned on us, Yuuji and I subconsciously turned away. Was the reason why we weren't punished further after skipping classes and getting caught by Ironman something to do with what the principal wants us to do?

“Excuse me, exactly what do we need to do in this summoning test?”

To direct the question back on track, Himeji-san raised her hand to ask the principal. Himeji-san, good job!

“Nothing really special. Just summon the summoned beasts and make them move. Besides, we can't test if they don't move...”

“Ah, we just need to summon the summoned beast? If so, I should be able to do so.”

Himeji-san clapped her hands together as she heaved a sigh of relief.She believed the principal's words so easily, yet I smell a rat (and I think Yuuji thinks the same too). Summon the summon beasts? For punishment, that's something way too simple for what the old granny would do.”

“I'm willing to help, principal.”

“...Me too.”

Unlike me, who had a bad feeling about this, Himeji-san and Kirishima-san requested to help out without saying further. I can see their exemplary character

from the way they were willing to help others without doubting.

“No, you two won't do. Your scores are too high.”

But the principal rejected their kind intentions without thinking.

That's true, I remembered that when we got the platinum bracelets, there was a case of rampancy because the scores were too great. If it was just a test, we do have to consider the dangers and exclude the ones with high marks. I guess it couldn't be helped that the principal would exclude these two who are the top of our year.

“That's how it is. So, this test will be taken by Yoshii, Sakamoto, Tsuchiya, Kinoshita and Shimada. The subject's Ancient Literature. I'll leave it to you people then.”

The principal named us as her lab rats, and the subject's Ancient literature. The ones taking part are me, Minami and Muttsurini—oi, hold on! Putting me on the same level as these guys!? Isn't this too saddening!?

“Wait a minute, old granny principal! I'm not happy about being associated with these guys!” (14 points)

“That's right, principal! Please don't put me on the same level as these idiots!” (6 points)

“...I am very very unwilling!” (9 points)

“You guys...where did you get the self-confidence to say say a thing...”

“Even with your scores added together, you can't even meet 1/10 of Himeji or Kirishima's scores...”

Thinking about it, my summoned beast has a lot of points worn off because I had to do all sorts of chores for the teachers (and that's extremely important). Right now, my marks are a little too low, and it can't be helped that I was chosen as a test subject.

“Wait a sec, old granny. My score shouldn't be that low, right?”

“I don't care whatever happens to you.”

“Is this what an educator should say?”

Yuuji's summoned beast won't cause any troubles even if it goes crazy. I guess that can be a correct judgment.

“Anyway, that's how it is now. The test will last for 1 hour from now. The summoning field for this test will be extended to the whole school, but I hope that you try not to leave the classroom as much as possible, since it'll be somewhat troublesome for me to get data. If the test goes well...how about some canteen and book vouchers? I'm willing to help you get these for free.”

“““Ohh!!”””

The moment the principal said that she was rewarding us, Minami, Muttsurini and Hideyoshi couldn't help but exclaim excitedly.

“I'll leave it to you people then. I'll give you the reward you deserve—so don't stop midway through.”

After saying this, the old granny left the classroom.

“Forget about the choosing of people...the principal sure is nice sometimes, to even prepare a reward for us. I just so happened to have a few books I wanted to read. That's great.”

“...Having lots of book vouchers isn't a problem.”

“I do think that the canteen vouchers are useful too.”

“That's great, everyone.”

“...I'm a little envious.”

Minami and the rest were chatting away happily, but I just couldn't open my heart and feel happy about it.

That's because it's too weird. That principal would actually reward us for doing a simple summoning.

“...”

Glancing aside, I see that Yuuji has the same suspicious attitude as me as he had a thinking look.

“Let's hurry up and begin then.”

“That's true. Things won't progress if we just stay around like this.”

“...Understood.”

Just when we couldn't tell what the ploy was, Minami and the rest were ready to summon their summoned beasts. Mu...should we think more and be more careful?

“You three, wait—”

“““Summon!”””

Before I could speak up and stop them, the three of them said 'summon' in unison.

Then, there were some familiar patterned arrays at our feet, and the summoned beasts slowly appeared from there. Is, is it really okay now?

I looked at the summoned beasts that were in front of me warily. Mu...

“That's great, the summoned beasts have reverted back to their own sizes.”

“As expected, this look is more suitable.”

“...The ears and tail are the same as before.”

Like what they said, based on appearance alone, they did revert back to the summoned beasts we were familiar with. The monster shapes from before don't exist now, and the summoned beasts' aren't too much of a trouble here.

“...They don't have any weapons.”

“Their uniforms are just like the school uniform.”

“Didn't the principal say that she wants to readjust the summoned beasts' equipment? I guess that's the reason.”

Kirishima-san and Himeji-san joined into the conversation too.

They're right. If there's a need to say what's different about the appearance of the summoned beasts, it would be that these summoned beasts are wearing the uniform of Fumitzuki Gakuen. They don't have any weapons in their hands, and since these three summoned beasts are in a similar state, it means that they haven't decided on the basic design of the equipment.

“At least we haven't found out anything suspicious up till now.”

“It's too early to relax now, Akihisa. According to what the old granny said just now, the changes this time should be more on the controls. The important point is when they move.”

“Un. If that's the case, I'll try moving it for a while.”

After checking that there wasn't much changes in the appearance, Hideyoshi got ready to command his summoned beast.

At this moment—

“Maybe I should jump on Akihisa and scare him.”

“““EHHHH!!???”””

A kid's sharp voice suddenly rang inside the classroom. Wha, what's going on? Who's talking now?

“Wh, what...was that just now?”

“It seemed like a kid was talking...”

Looking around, there wasn't anyone else in this classroom other than us, let alone a kid. Then, where did that voice come from.

“Speaking of which, our summoned beasts did change into monsters. Was it because of that there's this unexplainable supernatural phenomenon?”

““EHHHH!!!???””

Himeji-san and Minami cried out at the same time. Uu, supernatural phenomenon...

“But isn't this weird? This has nothing to do with the change of controls.”

“That's true. Then, the voice just now wasn't a supernatural phenomenon, right?”

“...Maybe it had nothing to do with the summoned beasts.”

Just when I was discussing this with Yuuji and Muttsurini—

“Where did that voice come from?”

We heard that voice again.

Mu? “Where did that voice come from?”. Isn't that...

“That mannerism...was that Hideyoshi?”

“No, I didn't say anything at all.”

Hideyoshi shook his head to indicate that he didn't open his mouth. But,

“That sounded like how Hideyoshi would talk...”

The voice sounded immature, but the tone and manner of speech was Hideyoshi's. But Hideyoshi said that he didn't talk at all,

“Wha, what!? A monster? Uu...that's scary!”

“...This voice belongs to a kid who hasn't had the voice broken.”

Besides the voice just now, we now heard the voices of other children. What's the situation now?

“Some, someone must have hidden an audiospeaker in the classroom!”

“Tha, that's right! That must be true.”

“...I don't think so.”

Muttsurini immediately shot down Himeji-san's and Minami's view. Since Muttsurini, who's an expert on this, made such a judgment, that should be the case. And besides, the voices just now didn't sound they they came through a machine to me.

I widened my eyes to look around as I try to find the source of the voices.

At this moment—

“...The summoned beasts were talking.”

Kirishima-san muttered. Eh? The summoned beasts were talking...

“Speaking of which, that's really troubling. How should I end that incident this morning...”

“It;s scary, it's scary! I hate stuff like monsters~”

“...A look from a lower position would be fine.”

As I looked closely, the summoned beasts' mouths were moving slightly, and we could hear the voices of the kids with the lip movements.

“Tha, that's true! The summoned beasts are talking!”

“Heh ~ that's rather interesting.”

I widened my eyes and watched the summoned beasts in front of me. One had his hands folded, one had her head covered as she squat down, and another was looking up to look at the scenery above. Each of them were acting according to

their own consciousness.

“An, anyway, at least it doesn't look like a supernatural phenomenon.”

“..fuu...that's great...”

Himeji-san and Minami, who are completely useless against things like ghosts and monsters, finally relaxed. They could finally relax after understanding that there's no supernatural phenomenon in the classroom. That's great.

“But well...instead of improving the controls, it felt more like automating the summoned beasts. Did they do this because you told them to?”

“...I didn't tell the summoned beast to do anything.”

“I didn't tell my summoned beast to do such a thing too.”

Up till now, the summoned beasts were either sighing, putting the hand on the chest, or lying on the chest.

And then,

“Good thing it's not some monster...or else I would end up so scared I couldn't sleep like the test of courage tournament the last time. I even had to sleep with Hazuki...”

“I got confessed to by a guy from a nearby middle school...if Akihisa knows of this, he'll treat me like a girl. I have to reject that person privately...”

“...I can see the secrets under a girl's skirt no matter when!”

The summoned beasts started talking. Eh? Did I...just hear something?

“Minami. The summoned just said that...you've been sleeping with Hazuki-chan after the test of courage tournament because you were scared of ghosts...is that true?”

“Kinoshita-kun...you were finally confessed to by guys outside school?”

“Muttsurini...oh well, you're no different from usual anyway.”

The three of them shook their heads to deny our questions.

“Aki, wha, what are you saying!? Those summoned beasts were saying things I never even thought of before! How can I be afraid of ghosts!” *“Not just sleeping time too. I've been bathing together with Hazuki because it's really scary to wash my hair alone in the bathroom!”*

“Shimada's right! No matter what, how can I be confessed to by a middle school guy when I'm a guy!? There has to be a draft before you lie!” *“And it's the third one this month...”*

“...I have no interest in girls' upskirts.”*"Deep beneath the skirt lies a man's romance, dreams and hopes. Tights, mini-skirts, long skirts, flare skirts, pleated skirts, all sorts of skirts have their own allure, but I don't consider culottes as skirts. Culottes have their own charm, but the defense's way too high..."*

Is this what it means by shooting oneself in the foot?

"But thinking about this carefully, this may be a pity. If I didn't act so tough and be honest in saying that I was scared, maybe Aki would hold my hand or something..."

"Wa, wait a minute!? What are you saying all of a sudden!?"

Minami hurriedly leaped at her summoned beast as something she did not want others to know was revealed. But Minami's summoned beast slipped out of her hands, and for some reason, came to grab my legs. Is this summoned beast thinking of using me as a shield?

"Eh? That's strange? Minami's summoned beast can touch me..."

The summoned beast that wasn't supposed to touch humans and physical objects is now holding onto my leg tightly. That's strange, except for my own summoned beast, the other summoned beasts shouldn't be able to touch anything...

"Is this something that old granny came up with? I think she messed up on the adjustments or something."

"Un~...I feel the same."

Yuuji's right. The principal must have messed up on the settings or something. The proof is that we haven't seen the scores of the summoned beast up till now.

"Forget about that! Aki, hand that kid over to me!"

"NO! I WANNA BE WITH AKI!"

Minami's summoned beast declared her own will as it was unwilling to move from my leg at all. She looked just like a kid.

"Eh? Did Minami's summoned beast just go against her master's will?"

"...The principal said that the summoned beast is now following the master's subconscious will."

"I see, so the summoned beast will follow its own will instead of what it insists on."

Yuuji's side is discussing about something difficult. What subconscious action will be more of their own nature, being self-conscious as they're automated, personality being like a kindergartener...un, I really don't understand what they're talking about.

"Eh, anyway..."

"...These summoned beasts have the self-awareness of a child, and their actions are no different from children."

"In other words, the summoned beasts will now say the true thoughts out, and they're somewhat like a child version of the summoner."

"I see. A child version of the master, so Minami's summoned beast would do such a thing."

"Aki, huggie~"

"Stop hugging! Why are you playing around? That's enough, let go of Aki!"

"NO!"

Minami continued to try and pull away the summoned beast that's holding onto me. Mu, this situation's rather interesting.

"It's okay, Minami. Don't mind. I'm used to it anyway."

"Eh? Aki, you're very used to this sort of thing?"

"I don't understand why, but I've been rather popular with kids ever since a long time ago."

"Maybe that's because your intelligence level are about the same as them."

"Shut up, Yuuji!"

As I reached my hand out to pat the summoned beast's head, Minami's summoned beast seemed to enjoy it as it closed its eyes. Ah, this really looks like Minami's little sister Hazuki-chan.

"Aki, aki, listen to me!"

"Hm? What is it?"

"I've been doing a lot of overboard things to you, actually, I li--"

"KYAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

"GYAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

Minami suddenly did a wrist twisting attack on me. What's going on!?

"Oi, what are you trying to say!? Why are you trying to do such things that'll trouble me even though you're my avatar?"

"Are you alright, Aki? Does it hurt? Sorry~"

"Oi! Are you listening to me!"

If possible, I would like you to explain to me what's going on too..."

"That's really bad. No matter how much I tried to explain that I was a guy, that boy just wouldn't believe me."

"--Skirts are full of charm, but the thing that's most worth mentioning are the kind hope that can be seen inside!"

"Muu...I really want to remove this summoned beast..."

"...The summoning area was too big. We can't go out of it."

Hideyoshi and Muttsurini's summoned beasts summoned to have their own will, and these talkative summoned beasts seemed to be troubling them.

Even if they want to remove the summoned beasts before they say anymore of their true thoughts, but the summoning field covers the entire school, so they can't remove them as when they want to. Besides, since the summoned beasts can move on their own, Hideyoshi and the rest don't dare to look away from it, which makes it even harder for them.

"But that's really amazing. Let alone Muttsurini, we hardly get to hear the secrets Hideyoshi wants to hide."

"That's right. Because Kinoshita-kun's most adept at making poker faces."

"No no no, Yuuji, Himeji, what are you saying? I'm normally hon--""*They're praising my acting skills. I'm so happy.*""..."

Hideyoshi's summoned beast was jumping about happily. That's interesting. I should try this too.

"Oh yeah, Hideyoshi..."

"Wha, what is it, Akihisa?"

As he was wary about me, Hideyoshi stuttered for a moment. Let's ask him some interesting questions.

"Hideyoshi, have you been confessed to by guys?"

"HOW CAN I BE CONFESSED TO BY GUYS!""*It's been every day recently."*

""""EVERYDAY!!?""""

"WHA, WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING! AKIHISA, THIS GUY'S SPOUTING NONSENSE! ACTUALLY, I--"*"Especially on Fridays and Mondays."*"I SAID NO!"

Hideyoshi continued to look flustered as he tried to hide what his summoned beast said. But Hideyoshi thought too much as this little thing won't change our thoughts on him, Besides, I already know that Hideyoshi was popular with the guys anyway.

"Then let's talk about Muttsurini. What should we ask him? Muttsurini, you--"

"...Do, don't ask me, I, I'm thinking about skirts."

"...Sorry"

"...!(shakes head flusteredly)"

I see...he's that concentrated on such a fantasy world...

Even if we hear Muttsurini's words, it doesn't seem any different from usual. Let's just ignore him for now.

"Then, finally--"

"--It's Shimada's turn."

"Wha, what?"

On feeling the stares from me and Yuuji, Minami looked extremely awkward. Then, she seemed to be trying to buck herself up as she coughed once before saying to us,

"Let me say this first! I don't have anything to hide! No matter what you try *"Actually, yesterday, I got a confession from a first-year girl"* NOOOOOOOOO!!!!!"

""""..."""

I haven't asked anything yet...it seems that Minami's not good at hiding secrets subconciously.

"Tha, that's too despicable, Aki! Using such a method to ask about my secrets!"

"No, I think it's that you just revealed it yourself, Minami..."

"Stop trying to defend yourself! Anyway, summon your summoned beast out and share your true thoughts with everyone!"

"True thoughts? As in the person I like? Actually, I like--"

"SHUT UP, YOU IDIOT!"

She wants me to summon my summoned beast? Even if it's Minami's request, I won't agree to that at all. In this situation, if I summon my summoned beast, it'll become an all-out confession. It was because I was wary of the principal's words that I managed to avoid self-destruction, and I won't summon my summoned beast no matter what.

"...It will say the true thoughts, is it..."

Just when I was thinking about how to avoid this calamity, Himeji-san, who was standing beside me, muttered to herself, and took out a pen and paper before writing some kanji. What is she trying to do?

"Well, Akihisa-kun..."

"Hm? What is it, Himeji-san?"

"Do you know how to read these words?"

"Let's see. 'Ga*p Pro*blem', right?"[1]

"Yes, that's right."

After hearing my answer, Himeji-san seemed to be rather happy as she smiled sweetly.

What did that question mean--

DON<--My summoned beast appeared.

"DAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMMMMMNNNNNN IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!"

"I'm sorry, Akihisa-kun, but I have something I want to know no matter what."

That's too cruel! Himeji-san, what did you do to me!

"Haha, you're really an idiot, Akihi*sa*."

"Yuuji, who wrote 'De l'esprit des lois'?" "

"*Mon*tesquieu."[2]

DON<--Yuuji's summoned beast appeared.

"DAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMMMMMNNNNNN IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!"

Yuuji and I ended up summoning our summoned beasts because of their tricks. Ha! Yuuji has no right to call me stupid like that!

"Nice job, you two! Answer honestly, Aki! Who do you like!?"

"Listen to me, listen to me, I like--"

"No one will treat you as a mute if you don't speak! Hurry up and answer, Aki!"

"A, Akihisa-kun! I want to know too!"

"...Yuuji, how do you view me? Tell me now."

The girls are now looking at Yuuji and my summoned beast. As their stares closed in, our summoned beasts,

"AKIHISA, YOU IDIOT! IT'S BECAUSE OF YOUR NAME THAT MY SUMMONED BEAST APPEARED!"

"YUUJI, YOU MORON! THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LAUGH AT OTHER PEOPLE'S MISFORTUNE!"

Our summoned beasts started fighting for some reason. Ahh, so those were our true thoughts.

"AKIHISA, YOU IDIOT! IT'S BECAUSE OF YOUR NAME THAT MY SUMMONED BEAST APPEARED!"

"YUUJI, YOU MORON! THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LAUGH AT OTHER PEOPLE'S MISFORTUNE!"

On a side note, we started fighting each other as well.

"Eh, Akihisa-kun, please ignore Sakamoto-kun for now and say who you like, okay?"

"That's right, Aki! You can't ask other people for their secrets and try to care about something else!"

"...Yuuji, tell me your true thoughts."

"ARRRGHHH! YUUJI YOU IDIOT!"

"DAAMMNNN YOU! AKIHISA YOU MORON!"

"DIE, YUUJI! BE RESPONSIBLE!"

"YOU SHOULD DIE, AKIHISA! GO TO HELL!"

"AKIHISA-KUN!"

"AKI!"

"...Yuuji...!"

Just when we were fighting

"Sorry to keep you waiting, everyone~ eh, what's going on? What interesting things are you doing? Let me take part too!"

Kudou-san, whose club activity ended, came to meet up with us after being late for so long.

What do we do now? I have a bad feeling about this for some reason...

"Heh~, summoned beasts that can say true thoughts out~ That seems interesting."

""""NOT AT ALL!!!""""

After knowing the reason, Kudou-san said that happily. It's because Kudou-san didn't summon her summoned beast, she found this interesting.

"Then, let me try and see if the summoned beasts will say its true thoughts~"

""""...(Looks away)."""

Everyone looked down to avoid being targeted.

At this moment, Kudou-san unhurriedly spoke up and chose the one she wanted to test,

"Muttsurini-kun."

"...(shocked)."

"I have something I always wanted to ask you~"

Kudou-san stared at Muttsurini and gave a smirk. Great! The victim's chosen!

"Hey, Muttsurini-kun, I want to ask you something."

"...I have nothing to--"

"...I'm very willing if it's ero-stuff."

"...Nothing to say to you."

The summoned beast immediately went against Muttsurini's will and spoke on its own. Is that really alright?

Ignoring our worries completely, Kudou-san just continued to look at Muttsurini in the eyes and said mischievously,

"Haha, we can talk about that, but this seems to be a little different from what I want to talk about~...ne, Muttsurini-kun."

Kudou-san deliberately paused for half a beat, perhaps to give him time to think, and then said,

"You often said that you're 'not interested' in me--well, you should be rather interested, right?"

On hearing Kudou-san's question, Muttsurini snorted coldly before saying,

"...What idiotic words are you saying..."

"...What kind of secrets are hidden under the shorts?"

"...Uu (pak pak pak)!"

"...It hurts."

Muttsurini forcefully hits the summoned beast that subconsciously revealed his true thoughts a few times.

Muu, no matter how Muttsurini tries to force it, the fact that he's interested in Kudou-san (or at least what's under her shorts) can be seen clearly from the way he's nosebleeding.

"Ahaha. This little fellow's really frank. How interesting~"

"...Not interesting at all!"

"...I really want to see the shorts."

"...Uu (pak pak pak)!"

"...Stop hitting me."

"Ahahaha!"

Even after knowing Muttsurini's true thoughts, Kudou-san seemed rather happy.

"Seems interesting. Shall I have some fun too~"

""Hm?""

Kudou-san looked away from Muttsurini and turned to Yuuji and me. What does she want to do to us?

"Hey, Yoshii-kun, Sakamoto-kun..."

After calling our names, Kudou-san suddenly reached out to grab her skirt for some reason.

"Maybe I'm not interesting for wearing shorts--"

She deliberately stopped halfway to give us time to talk. Wha, what is she trying to do?

"Do you want...to see what's under my skirt?"

As she said this, Kudou-san even lifted her short skirt under. Do I want to look

under her skirt? Haha, really, I thought she would say something else!

"What are you saying, Kudou-san? We're not*"Please let me look under your skirt!"*perverted people..."

"That's right Kudou. No matter how you try to fool us*"Wait Akihisa! Me first!"* it's useless..."

"Aki, come over for a while."

"Akihisa-kun, I have something to say to you."

"...Yuuji, come over."

What's going on? Why do I sense impending death?

~Please hold on for a moment~

"Really, it seems that the punishment for the peeping and the confiscated manage haven't made you learn. You'll definitely create a lot of problems with you create those pervy things. Right, Mizuki?"

"Eh? We, well, I guess it couldn't be helped that boys at this age would think of such pervy stuff...bu, but anyway, Akihisa-kun shouldn't look at Aiko-chan that way! If you continue to think those pervy things, I will have to punish you with Minami-chan."

"...Yuuji, I won't allow you to cheat on me."

""We remembered it deep inside our hearts.""

Yuuji and I put our foreheads on the tatami mat and apologized in unison.

Uu...Minami's wrestling techniques and Himeji-san's warning made my body ache all over...

"I'm sorry, Muttsurini-kun, Yoshii-kun and Sakamoto-kun, I just want to tease you."

Kudou-san put her hands together and apologize to us tragic people.

"...I have no interest in Kudou."

"That's right. You're too much, Kudou-san."

"Please show some self respect to yourself, will you?"

"Hm? I shouldn't lie just to tease you. Sorry."

"It's great that you can honestly reflect on things--hm? lie?"

What did she mean by lie?

"That's right. I just lied. Actually, I--"

Lifting her skirt up to a height where something can be vaguely seen underneath, Kudou-san said slowly,

"Actually, I'm...not wearing shorts today."

"...U (Tatata)!"

"...U (Tatata)!"

"...U (Tatata)!"

""WE DON'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT!""

"""No need to explain! Come over!"""

~Please hold on for a moment again~

"Damn it...my consciousness' starting to fade..."

"Not good...my fingers are trembling..."

Yuuji and I collapsed onto the tatami mat lifelessly and muttered. We wanted to get up, but it seems that we need some time before we can recover."

"...Yuuji, I'm not wearing shorts underneath as well."

"Really, Aki, why are you always thinking of those pervy things in you mind?"

"Akihisa-kun, please reflect on your actions this time."

The girls lectured us one by one as we lay on the tatami mats. Muu...even if you say so...

"...(Unable to move at all)."

On a side note, Muttsurini couldn't move at all as he lost too much blood due to noseblood. Because of that, he was able to avoid the anger bombardment of the girls. On a certain sense, we're really envious of him.

"Aki, you idiot! Pervert!"

Minami's summoned beast even climbed onto my back and jumped on me. But because of her Ancient Literature scores, the summoned beast wouldn't hurt me no matter how they try. If it's just that, there's no need to be scared even if I made her angry...

Just when my body regained its senses, Kudou-san again ran to us.

"Also, listen, you three. I overslept this morning, so I didn't have time to wear my bra."

""Please spare us *"What did you say happened to your bra!?"* the agony already!!""

AHHH!! Even though we know that we can't be taken by Kudou-san, we'll still show our honest reactions subconsciously!

Just when we were getting scared of the sudden storm of rage, Kirishima-san came over to Yuuji. This guy will have to take the third punishment today...and I don't think even he will take that, right? Goodbye Yuuji, we'll meet up in the other world.

"...Yuuji."

"No, that's not it, Shouko! This is a normal reaction a guy can't control...!"

Yuuji continued to flail his arms as he tried to defend himself weakly. However, Kirishima-san continued to remain silent and walked closer to Yuuji,

"...Eh."

"Hm? WHOA!"

She suddenly reached out and put Yuuji's head into her chest. What? That bastard!!! I'm so envious of him!!

"...Are you happy?"

"Wha, what are you saying! How can I be so happy about such a *"YAHHOOOO"*TTHHHHIIIIIIINNNNNNGGGGG!!!"

Yuuji used all his strength to try and cover the true thoughts his summoned beast said.

On hearing Yuuji's true thoughts, Kirishima-san smiled and held Yuuji's head in even tightly.

"...Then let's hug longer."

"What are you saying, *"WOOOOOOOAAAAAHHHH!!!"* LET GO OF MEEEEEE!!!!"

Yuuji tried his best to struggle and get away from Kirishima-san's clutch.

Really, that guy's really not honest. He should just express how happy he is in this situation.

"You're so lucky, Yuuji! I'm jealous! I'm jealous!!"

See, why is my summoned beast so honest?

"Akihisa-kun, you shouldn't look at Shouko-chan that way."

"Aki, you haven't reflected on yourself enough?"

I'm really too honest here.

"I'm happy that Akihisa-kun's interested in the opposite gender, but you can't look at Shouko-chan and Aiko-chan like that. Akira-san will be angry. Even if she isn't, haven't you created a lot of problems recently because of pervy stuff?"

"Yes...I'm really sorry..."

I kneeled down and listened to Himeji-san lecture me. Minami, who was sitting beside Himeji-san, wanted to tell me off too, but on hearing her summoned beast comment about Yuuji's situation *"Will my small breasts make others happy"*, she immediately ran out. However, I guess the reason Yuuji (summoned beast) was that happy was that, more than the size of the breasts, the bigger reason was that Kirishima-san was the one who hugged him.

"Speaking of which, if you're really interested, you should calm down and find a steady partner. Everything has an order."

Himeji-san put her hands on her waist and warned me. Himeji-san may be angry, but her angry side had an undescribable charm. It really looks cute to me.

"...Akihisa-kun, are you listening to me?"

"Ye, yes, I was listening to you!"

Wah, that was bad. Looks like I have to listen to her properly. Himeji-san's angry now. If I let her know that she's cute when she's angry,

"Angry Himeji-san's really cute, and there doesn't seem to be any terrifying punishment on the body."

"NNNNNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

"A, Akihisa-kun?"

I said that it'll be bad if she finds out, yet I said it out! This idiot summoned beast! It's rare that she didn't beat me up today; what will happen if she changes her mind!?

"..."

I timidly looked for Himeji-san's response.

Himeji-san's still angry, but she couldn't hide her happy expression. As a girl, of course she would be happy about being called cute, but she must be feeling complicated about being called cute when she's angry. Anyway, it's best if she doesn't change her mind and punish me...

"(Ahem) Akihisa-kun, an, anyway..."

"Ye, yes, Himeji-san?"

"Are you going to punish me now?"

Seeing Himeji-san peek forward for some reason, I subconsciously took a step back.

"No, I don't have any intention of punishing you...I, I know that this is sudden--A, Akihisa-kun...do you have anyone you like?"

"Eh? Why are you asking that out of a sudden?"

I couldn't catch up to the sudden change in topic. What is Himeji-san saying out of a sudden?

"...Even though I knew it, but Akihisa-kun really doesn't understand others when this is involved..."

"Why is she asking me whether I have someone I like at this moment? Is this like those movies when someone will pass my words to the person I like so that I can rest in peace? Speaking of which, I believe this sort of scene happened in the movie I watched last week. Holding tightly onto the hand of the dying comrade, letting him say his last words and lit a cigarette for him to smoke in his mouth. That person was then called back to be with the Lord. Then...will Himeji-san make me smoke later? But I'm underaged. Can this really do...?"

"Erm, Himeji-san, I'm still underaged here..."

"And also, that's thinking in a completely wrong direction..."

How troublesome. I'll definitely be expelled if I smoke in school.

"Does Aki have feelings for me? I really want to know!"

"Damn it! Just be quiet!"

"NOOO~!!!"

"Don't say no!"

Slightly far off, Minami was fighting with her summoned beast. She also has it hard today.

"You're mistaken, Akihisa-kun. I just want to know if Akihisa-kun has someone he likes."

Himeji-san asked again. Ah, so that's not a declaration of death--someone I like? Un, but that's something I can't just say in front of others...

"Well, I like--"

"FLY AWAY! LIKE A BALL!!!"

"KKYYYYAAAAHHHH!!!"

"Ahh! chibi Akihisa-kun!"

I kicked the summoned beast into the dustbin as precaution before it spoke. Though the feedback will hurt my body all over, I managed to prevent my secrets from being revealed. That was really close.

"How could you do that, Akihisa-kun? Even if the one being kicked is you, that's..."

"It hurts."

"Okay, okay, pain pain go away, go far far away~"

Himeji-san saved my summoned beast from the dustbin and stroked the summoned beast's head softly. Damn it! My summoned beast, stop fooling around over there!

"...Yuuji, how about you? Do you like me?"

"Humph, how stupid. I don't have a duty to answer that."

"Me? Of course I--"

"CRY OUT AND WATCH MY ROUNDHOUSE KICK!!!"

"MUKYYYAAAA!!!"

"...Yuuji's too much."

Seems like Yuuji's having it tough over there too.

"Well, Akihisa-kun..."

Just when I was focusing on Yuuji's situation, Himeji-san carried my summoned beast and walked over.

"...(stare)."

"Akihisa-kun, what's wrong?"

"No, nothing, nothing at all!"

I frantically waved my hands and tried to look around.

Himeji-san walked over. That's not the problem--the problem is that she's holding my summoned beast in those soft breasts of hers! I've been feeling a certain hot and squishy feeling. Don't tell me...

"No, that's not it! I was just scolded about thinking about pervy stuff, so how can I think about such impure stuff out of a sudden? I'm not some perverted person--"

"The soft breasts feel so nice!"

"LET'S GO! THE NEXT STOP'S THE INCINERATOR!"

"Ah, Akihisa-kun! It's too much to kick your summoned beast outside no matter what!"

Himeji-san hugged onto my summoned beast tightly as if she wanted to protect it. DAMNED BASTARD! STOP GLEEING AWAY OVER THERE, MY IDIOTIC SUMMONED BEAST!

"Speaking of which, Akihisa-kun, as for the question just now."

"--The question just now?"

"Yes. It's the person...Akihisa-kun likes."

Ku...! Is she intending to ask the same question as just now? I really don't want to do this...! But since she insists on it, I have no other choice. Let's make Himeji-san try the pain of being questioned. We're all good friends, so we have to go through thick and thin!

Before my summoned beast could speak, I hurriedly spoke up to answer her question.

"Well, I like,"

"Ye, yes. Who does Akihisa-kun likes?"

Zuzu, in contrast to Himeji-san who couldn't help but bend forward--

"--G Class' Samon-san."[3]

I pretended to tell her.

"...Eh? Sa, Samon-san? Who's that? I've never heard of that name before, and does our school have a G class - AH!"

DON<--Himeji-san's summoned beast appeared.

"Okay, now everyone's assembled! Himeji-san, let's talk about who we like!"

"Tha, that's too sneaky, Akihisa-kun! Using the name of the person you like to fool me is against the rules!"

Now I won't be the one being questioned all the time, and I can get everyone else involved in this as well.

"Fufu, welcome here, Mizuki. Let's all talk about our true thoughts happily."

Minami walked over unknowingly as she put her hand on Himeji-san's shoulder and smiled. That's right, having an extra chat partner is something worth being happy about.

"No, no problems, I don't have anything to hide in the first place,"

"Just now, when Akihisa-kun was thinking about pervy things, I didn't punish him because I have some things I couldn't say."

"NNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

Himeji-san frantically covered the mouth of her overly honest summoned beast. Welcome to our world.

"You're too naive, Mizuki. It's because you've been thinking about trying to hide things that the summoned beasts would end up saying them out."

"My doll and table have photos of that guy, and also..."

Minami and Himeji-san leaped towards their summoned beasts. How stupid...It's because they're thinking about hiding things that this,

"Something I want to hide? Speaking of which, I want to hide the fact that my A-books were under the laundry basket..."

"UWAAAAHHHH!!"

"MUKKKYYYAAAAHHHH!!!"

I dumped my summoned beast into the dustbin. Who'll even care about feedback now?

☆

~At a same time, in a different place~

"We, well, Kubo-kun."

"Un? Erm, you're..."

"I'm the class representative of E class. My name's Nakabayashi."

"Really? Hello, Nakabayashi-san, do you need something?"

"Erm, how should I put it...actually, I, I wanted to say a few words with Kubo-kun. My heart's all fuzzy recently because of this...no, not fuzzy, or rather, sorrow? Sadness? Or worrying endlessly[4]? Anyway, I don't know how to express this clearly, but no matter what, I have to tell you, all my troubles up till now...well, Kubo-kun, are you busy now?"

"Not really. I have time to listen to your troubles. No problems[5]."

DON<--Kubo and Nakabayashi's summoned beasts appeared.

"Actually, I've always liked Kubo-kun from A class...maybe it's because I've been exercising all day that I really like those knowledgeable eyes of him--I really hope to go out with him!"

"Why must Yoshii-kun be so defenseless? He's really cute! Those clumsy actions, clumsy words, every clumsy action makes me fall in love with him."

""..""

"...Nakabayashi-san..."

"...Yes..."

"...I'm sorry."

"WHY MUST I BE REJECTED IN SUCH A HUMILIATING MANNER!? NOOOOOOO~!!!"

☆

""TAAKE THIS!!!""

""KYAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!""

Yuuji and I seemed to act in unison as we kicked our summoned beasts into the dustbin. I have no idea how many times I repeated this action today...

"Haa, haa, haa...why did I end up being so tired today..."

"Yeah...I didn't expect a self-aware summoned beast, to be this troublesome..."

"Yuuji, you have it light...unlike me...I still have to take, the feedback of my, summoned beast..."

It's tiring having our summoned beasts as our opponents, and this time, no matter how we attacked, the summoned beasts' points wouldn't drop at all...damn it, is this a trap that old granny set up!?

"...Yuuji, you should give up and tell me your honest thoughts."

"I want to dig up more secrets about Yoshii-kun~. This is for some people, right♪"

""WHO'LL LET YOU KNOW!!""

Kirishima-san and Kudou-san haven't summoned their summoned beasts, and looked completely uninterested. No, even if those two people summoned their summoned beasts, I think we can expect them to feel at ease.

"Kudou-san! Shouldn't you be asking your worst nemesis Muttsurini instead of me?"

"Mn, I wanted to do that too, but Muttsurini-kun became like that--"

"...I have no interest in Ero-stuff."

"...I'm very interested in them."

"...It doesn't matter what skirt it is."

"...How can it not matter? That's really important!"

"...It doesn't matter anyway!"

"...No, I love them all!"

"--He's not much different from usual anyway."

"U...that's too sneaky..."

Kudou-san's right. Right now, Muttsurini's nosebleeding like mad and practically letting his summoned beast say his true thoughts, and he doesn't look much different from usual. It's really not interesting to tease Muttsurini in this state.

"In, in that case, I'll--"

To get her away from me, I looked around to check everyone's situation. How's everyone's situation now--

"A, Akihisa-kun! You can't come over to us!"

"And you can't eavesdrop! Look around to the other side!"

"But I'm troubled that he's looking at other girls like that! Even though I didn't punish him, I did lecture him badly!"

"Ah, I'm the same here! I won't allow that to happen!"

Not far away, Himeji-san and Minami were frantically trying to get in front of

their summoned beasts to prevent their summoned beasts' words from being heard. Though they tried their best, I could hear the summoned beasts' voices--but I would eavesdrop on some weird terms like 'punishment', 'H-stuff' and 'pillow'. That really increased my curiosity.

"That's too bad. I knew all about Mizuki-chan and Minami-chan's secrets the last time we stayed overnight at prez's house."[6]

Kudou-san clicked her tongue and reached her thumb out, shaking it at me. Damn it! Couldn't she just look for Himeji-san and the rest...

"How about Yuuji?"

"STOP KIDDING AROUND! SHOUKO ALONE'S A HUGE HEADACHE TO ME!"

"Mn~...Sakamoto-kun's under the control of the prez. There's no need for me."

Yuuji won't do? Then, Hideyoshi's left.

"That's strange? Speaking of which, I didn't seem to hear Hideyoshi's summoned beast talking."

"Mn? That's right? Isn't that too unfair?"

Thinking about it carefully, we didn't hear Hideyoshi or his summoned beast at all. What's going on?

"Arre? What's with you two? Did you call my name?"

Once I called Hideyoshi's name, Hideyoshi, who was sitting silently at a corner of the classroom widened his eyes. So he's been in the classroom all this time, but why is he so quiet?

"Kinoshita-kun, were you sleeping?"

"No, in this situation, even I can't sleep, Kudou."

It's true that anyone who can sleep in this situation is a big idiot who's a lost cause.

"It'll be troubling if my summoned beast continues to say stuff on its own. So I imagined myself to be like an abbot on a pilgrimage, and curb my emotions using Zen."

"..."

Hideyoshi's summoned beast was sitting down beside him with his legs folded, closing his eyes like Hideyoshi just now.

"Heh~so this can let our emotions settle~"

"I see. We just need to empty our consciousness."

"Um, seems that way."

The summoned beast with a calm and still expression straightened its back, and looked just like a kid. How cute.

Just when I was thinking about this--

"...I brought Yuuji and Yoshii's summoned beasts over."

""EH!?""

"It hurts."

"She did some overboard things to us."

Kirishima-san carried our summoned beasts over with one hand on one. Damn it! When did she!?

"SH, SHOUKO! HAND THAT THING OVER TO ME!"

"PLEASE, KIRISHIMA-SAN! HAND ME MY SUMMONED BEAST OVER!"

"...No. If I return it to you, you two are going to jump over and disturb me."

Kirishima-san's dead set on not returning our summoned beasts as she carried both summoned beasts and hid behind Kudou-san. This is really bad!

"Now I can ask their true thoughts. Yoshii-kun, do you have anyone you like~?"

"...Yuuji, what are your true thoughts?"

Having finally gotten this opportunity, Kudou-san and Kirishima-san raised the doubts from their hearts. Even if we try to shut our mouths tight, that--

"Someone I like? That's--"

Our summoned beasts were ready to speak up obediently without caring about our intent. Damn it! If that's the case, we can only try Hideyoshi's method.

Yuuji and I hurriedly folded our legs and sat down on the tatami mat. Zen, Zen...

Soon after, our summoned beasts did shut up and sat on the tatami mat silently as they entered a Zen phase. Ohh, that's really effective!

"That's strange? Yoshii-kun?"

"...Yuuji? Your answer?"

"..."

Our summoned beasts continue to remain silent. Very good, this is really effective!

"Look at that, Minami-chan! It seems that we'll be alright once we enter a Zen phase."

"Really? Let us try it!"

We can't understand the situation the rest are going through once we close our eyes, but I can feel Himeji-san and Minami walking over to me with their summoned beasts and entered a Zen phase. I see. These two are sitting down cross-legged in a Zen phase. I see, I see...eh? Cross-legged? If, if that's the case...

"Sitting cross-legged with skirts on? I wanna see, I wanna see!"

"DAMN IT!!!! MY EVIL THOUGHTS!!!"

My summoned beast immediately regained its enthusiasm and jumped up. Damn

it! You're too honest!

"What! sitting down cross-legged with skirts on?"

"...I wanna look too..."

""DAMN IT!!!! MY EVIL THOUGHTS!!!""

Ah, looks like I'm not the only one who thought that way.

"A, Akihisa-kun..."

"Aki...why are you thinking of those obscene things again?"

"I, I'm not! You're mistaken! It wasn't like that! Actually, I *"Cheh, they're sitting in a seiza position instead of a cross-legged position"* I'm really sorry! I was thinking of such impure and obscene stuff!"

Damn it! They knew all of my dirty thoughts!

"...Yuuji, I won't forgive you for cheating on me."

"THAT, THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS, SHOUKO! I WASN'T--*"It's a guy's instincts to react to girls when they're sitting down crossed-legged!"* KUUAAAAHHH!!! AAAKKKKIIIIHHHHHIIIISSSSSAAAAA!!! EVEN I STARTED TO THINK ABOUT THIS BECAUSE YOU SAID THOSE NONSENSSSSEEEE!!!"

That's really a dangerous situation. An evil thought that comes out for a moment will involve life and death. Zen, zen...

"That's right, I should have worn pink underwear today, right?"

"I'm wearing aquablue~"

""NOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!"

Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen...!! Evil thoughts begone! Troubles begone! Hurry up and think of that damned old granny's naked body...!

"Uggeeeehhh...I don't feel so good now..."

I ended up disgusting myself, but at least I managed to clear my mind of evil thoughts. Very good, very good, let's just continue to keep this Zen phase.

""""..."""

After a while, all of us clear our minds, and silence occupied this classroom again. That's really great.

"Oi oi, Yoshii-kun."

"..."

I continued to close my eyes. Though Kudou-san called me a few times, it's not enough to get me out of my Zen phase. I continued to close my eyes and sit cross-legged, cutting off all information from the outside world.

"Mn~ really, it became so quiet all of a sudden."

"...How bothersome. I want to know Yuuji's true thoughts."

The two girls who were in a safe zone muttered to themselves. I'm really sorry, but there won't be any more interesting things from now on. We just have to wait until the time ends.

"Ah, that's right. I met the principal before I came into the classroom."

"...Un."

"The principal handed me some stuff, and told me that if everyone's not moving, I should use these."

"...The principal handed you something?"

"That's right. The principal handed me some boxes, and told me to take out the paper slips from the boxes one by one and read it out to everyone."

I opened my eyes slightly, and saw Kudou-san open four small boxes. What are those...no no, let's forget about that. I should now focus on Zen. Calm down, calm down...

"...Three cards...word association game?"

"I don't really understand, but that's likely the feeling. Anyway, let's try it first. Let me see. Take the first piece out. Hear, prez, read it."

"...'Striped'."

"Here's the second one."

"...'Pink'."

"Here's the third one."

"...'Aquablue'."

"Think of something from these three things. What will that be?"

"...That's really hard."

""""PANTIES!!!""""

Not good! I got to calm down, and fast! This is a trap set by the enemy. I have to keep calm and clear no matter what, no desire for anything now...

"Now for the next round. Here's the first card."

"...'Yukata'."

"Here's the second one."

"..."Nurse uniform'."

"And here's the third one."

"...'Sailor uniform'."

""""KINOSHITA HIDEYOSHI!""""

""""YOSHII AKIHISA!""""

"WAIT A SEC! WHY ARE MY VOTES IN THIS WORD ASSOCIATION THE SAME AS HIDEYOSHI!"

I can't accept it! Hideyoshi's definitely the one if we're talking about cute dress-up, so why am I tied 3 vs 3 with him--eh? 3 votes? Those three are Himeji-san, Minami, and the last one...

"Don't tell me, even Hideyoshi thinks of me this way?"

"Hm? Akihisa, what are you saying? How can I look at my friend *"If it's girls' outfit, Akihisa's definitely the one suited for it!"* in a perverted fashion, right?"

This is way too scary. Hideyoshi could say a lie without blinking an eye, and didn't even change his expression at all. Is this the ability of being a born actor...

"That's not right, Hideyoshi. I wasn't thinking about girls' outfit. Aren't those types of clothing what Hideyoshi will wear secretly?"

"Akihisa, so that's how you view me...!"

Ku...! I was too careless and said out my true thoughts!

"And now for the next round. Hee."

"...'Pervy stuff'."

"Here's the second one."

"...'Say it secretly'."

"Here's the third one."

"...'To Yoshii'."

Why me!? Why is it that I'm treated as a live target every time this happens!

No, wait, I have to calm down first. It's times like this that I can't fall into disarray. Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen Zen...

"I see~ so I have to say pervy stuff to Yoshii-kun~ Fufufu~ Can I try it?"

"...Un."

"Thanks prez."

Someone save me--the thought came too late as Kudou-san already came close to me. She put her lips at my ears, took a short breath and muttered,

"Hey, Yoshii-kun."

That's something that people could associate, a charming and sexy voice.

Ku...! Kudou-san seems to be really motivated now! Got to endure! I got to endure this! I can only tell me that this involves life and death. Got to endure...

"Akihisa-kun, you can't think of pervy stuff because of Aiko-chan!"

"Aki, I'll definitely not forgive you if you make any strange response!"

They're warnings, but the girls looked like they were ready to send me 6 feet under anytime.

"..."

I cleared my soul and prayed for time to tick by faster.

Kudou-san seemed to think that my resistance was rather interesting and deliberately paused for a long time before whisper into my ear,

"...○▲×□ and..... ▲●※■"

"Eh?"

The words I've never heard of before made me cry out in a puzzled manner.

○▲×□? ▲●※■? What's that?

"???"

My summoned beast continued to sit down cross-legged and tilt its head in a puzzled manner.

I don't understand what did Kudou-san just say. What was that?

"...○▲×□ and▲●※■.....! (PAAAAA)"

"...○▲×□ and▲●※■.....! (PAAAAA)"

I don't know which idiot and his summoned beast were nosebleeding like crazy. Since that guy's being so excited, the words must be really perverted...but I don't understand what they mean at all, so I could escape unscathed.

"That's strange? Yoshii-kun, you don't have any response at all?"

"? I don't understand what you mean."

"...Mu~..."

It seemed that Kudou-san was unhappy with my response as I felt Kudou-san puffed her cheeks unhappily in front of the calm summoned beast. That's a pity, Kudou-san. Though it hurts your pride, I win this time. Hurry and give up, return to where you belong--

"--Fuu."

"HYAAAAAAHHHHH!!??"

Just when I was thinking about that, an abnormal feeling suddenly came from my ear.

What? What did she do to me? What am I feeling now?"

"Kudou-san!? Did you just blow into my ear!?"

"What the heck, my ear and back are feeling strange."

"Kyah. What do you think~"

"A, Aiko-chan! You can't do that! If you do that to Akihisa-kun *"Akihisa-kun's voice was really cute just now"* KYYYYAAAAAAHHHH!!!"

"That's right! You did that to Aki *"So Aki's sensitive on the ears and neck"* NOOOOOOO!!!"

"Everyone, shouldn't you continue staying in a zen phase instead of thinking about this~?"

""""Guu."""

The summoned beasts seemed like it was about to say something shocking. I hurriedly closed my eyes and steadied my thoughts.

However--

"...(Cling)."

"...(Cling)."

Himeji-san and Minami's summoned beast were clinging tightly onto both left and right sides of my hand. My neck had to hold the weights of two summoned beasts, and to be honest, that's a little tough. It seems like they want to protect me from Kudou-san's demonic clutches. But in that case, I really can't concentrate on my Zen...

"Un. In that case, I can relax a bit."

"...Aiko, don't bully Yoshii too much."

"Okay, let's play another round. It'll end after this round. Here's the card."

"...'Your'."

"Here's the second one."

"...'real'."

"Here's the third one."

"...'Someone you like'."

"""Erm, that"""

"""DOOOORRRRYYYYYAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!!!!"""

Once I recovered, I found Himeji-san, Minami and even Hideyoshi beat their summoned beasts as if they couldn't take it anymore, and finally stuffed the summoned beasts into the dustbin.

“I really can't take it...the feedback's killing my body...”

“I haven't felt this tired for such a long time...”

“...Uncomfortable...”

“Even I'm feeling tired...”

“Uu...if this keeps up, maybe I have to end up confessing in such a weird situation...”

“Me too, I don't want to confess because of such a ridiculous thing...”

Everyone started talking in weak voices.

There's still some time until we're released from this misery. What should we do....

“Speaking of which, why must we be humiliated like this?”

“Yeah! Even if it's unreasonable, there has to be a limit!”

“Yeah, who's the reason why we were treated so cruelly like that!?”

“Yeah, who's the real culprit!”

“Muu, if there's a need to say—”

Immediately, everyone started to think of someone.

White-haired, foul-mouthed, calling us to summon even though she knew this would happen, that damned old granny who's the source of all evil!

“““…”””

Zu, zt, zt, zt...

The next moment, our summoned beasts opened the classroom door and went out on their own.

Ahh, I see. Everyone got the same conclusion.

“But then again, that's how it should be.”

HIROMI NAKABAYASHI

“After thrashing others badly and treating them as guinea pigs, she's too naïve to think that she won't be involved.”

“I think that's the consequences of cause and effects.”

“...An expected retribution.”

“But I won't let her off that easily.”

Everyone answered in unison. Shouldn't we have done that right from the beginning?

A few minutes later, the old granny's hoarse scream could be heard from downstairs. But that must be because the summoned beasts weren't controlled. Since it's a problem with the summoning system, we aren't responsible at all.

Our Song by Tsunemura Yuusaku

Poem: ‘The Sun and the Sunflower’.

Written by Tsunemura Yuusaku.

The moment I realized it,

I was always chasing you.

The moment I started remembering,

I was always chasing your smile.

Kinoshita Hideyoshi.

If I’m the sunflower.

You’re the sun shining on me.

I will chase your shine,

And grow into a big flower.

I can’t express these feelings through words,

But even so, I want to pass my feelings to you.

I love you, Kinoshita Hideyoshi.

I really, really LOVE you.

(The Super Disgusting poem is complete.)

Comments

17 year old student (male)-"Very touching! I can't stop smiling!"

16 year old student (male)—“Brilliant! Absolutely brilliant! I couldn't help but continue to cry after reading this!”

17 year old student (female)—“I always try to force a smile, but after reading this poem, I couldn't even smile at all!”

23 year old teacher (female): “After reading this poem, I couldn't help but vomit; and I managed to lose 3 kg successfully!”

16 year old student (female)—“That actor idiot brother of mine has been getting nightmares every night nowadays.”

38 year old psychiatrist (male)—“There's been an increase in number of patients recently.”

Please send your thoughts over.

Effects may differ from person to person.

Me and Lottery and The Pot of Darkness

僕と福引きと闇の鍋

A few days ago, we had a sports meeting.

During one of the sports events, the summoned beast baseball tournament, we really betted on our lives and fought to the very end.

At that time, Fukumura-san collapsed as he caught the pickoff from Himeji-san, at that time, Fukumura-san was knocked to the ground after Takahashi-sensei's hit, after that, Fukumura-san got hit by Takahashi-sensei's hit.

After sacrificing our comrade, we finally won the match.

But that victory—to us, was the start of another test.

"Aki-kun, what is this?"

In my house's living room, ane-san passed over the package the school sent over to me and started interrogating.

I tried my best not to look at her and answered, softly,

"…It's some slightly pervy reference book."

Really—this is another great test.

"I see. So then, what's this?"

"…It's a slightly embarrassing reference book."

"I see. And this?"

"…It's a reference book for me to become an adult."

As we continued on, ane-san's face started to give off a gentle smile.

To the bystander, maybe she might look really calm now as she remained still, but as a younger brother, I knew very well that that was an attacking expression.

If I continued to agitate ane-san, my life will be immediately terminated by her. Now's a time for a change in fortunes, I guess?

"…"

I slightly pondered for a while. In this situation where I need to make a big decision, I need to find someone to talk to. It'll be great if I can have someone I can talk to in this situation…

'Do you want to listen to my suggestion for this kind of thing?'

Oh my? Isn't this the devil in my heart? It's been a long time. I'm a little insecure that it's the devil who came up, but it doesn't matter now as long as I can talk to someone—

'Wait a minute. If you don't want to talk to the devil, you can talk to this angel here,'

Sooi!

'Uoh! The angel that just appeared got sent flying the sky like a PET bottle!'

The angel in my heart, I think I told you not to appear again.

'An, anyway, ane-san's feeling extremely agitated right now. How about we think through the possible scenarios to prevent agitating her?'

I see. Going through a simulation in the mind to expect what will happen. That's a good idea.

"Aki-kun, do you have anything you want to say to me?"

Ane-san asked me. How should I answer? I have to think through I carefully.

Scenario 1 'Play Dumb' "They should be mistaken."

"Really?"

"Mn, I don't know why I would have those things."

“But the slip that came with the package has the words ‘these are things confiscated from Yoshii Akihisa’.”

Nope. I can’t play dumb and say that the teacher messed up when the explanation slip came over as well.

Scenario 2 ‘Admit my own mistake’.

“I’m sorry. It’s my fault.”

“I see.”

“I’m really sorry.”

“Then grit your teeth and get ready to die.”

My ane-san isn’t someone who will forgive others immediately after hearing an apology.

Scenario 3 ‘Push the blame to Yuuji’

“Actually, it’s all Yuuji’s fault.”

“I see.”

“I was framed.”

“I don’t want to hear your excuses.”

You shouldn’t have asked in the first place then.

No matter whether I play dumb, admit my own mistake or push the blame to Yuuji, it seems that I won’t be able to escape from ane-san’s demonic clutches. In other words, the only answer that can allow me to survive is something other than this answer.

Okay, in the case, I’ll use the fourth choice to answer ane-san’s question.

I lifted my head and looked straight into ane-san’s eyes, took a deep breath, and said to her,

“It’s ane-san’s fault.”

‘Pushing the blame onto the person who’s fuming now!?’

‘That’s the worst answer you could think of.’

‘What were you thinking? How did you think of this answer…’

I just found out that I chose the worst possible answer. Though it’s normal to be shaken when I’m facing an unprecedented crisis, I still couldn’t hide the shock that I chose the worst answer.

Thinking about the terrifying corporal punishment that would happen on me anytime now, I became so scared that I can’t control my trembling—

“? Arre…?”

Unexpectedly, ane-san didn’t do anything really tragic to me.

“Haa…really, you…”

Ane-san said this and sighed. Ah, seems like she was willing to forgive me. This is a one in a million chance. Let’s use this chance to apologize honestly!

“Well, ane-san, I’m sorry. I did reflect on—”

“Kneel and bow down first.”

I stand corrected. She has no intention of forgiving me at all.

“Eh…ane-san, shouldn’t the classic line be ‘get over here and sit down’, right? ‘Kneel and bow down’ seems to be someone weird somewhere.”

“I afraid that I can’t help but kiss you once you lift your head.”

“…”

The floor feels so icy, so cooling, so comfortable.

“Aki-kun, ane-san never said that you can’t read these books at all.”

Ane-san picked my reference books up and says,

“I’m just saying that if you want to read it, you must be prepared to die.”

I guess this means that same thing as ‘you can’t read them at all’.

“Really, it can’t be helped that guys will be interested in these things, but there’s an age limit to reading these kinds of books. You need to wait till you’re of an old enough age to read. You have to endure it before that.”

“Uu…ane-san, you’re too serious…”

“Of course. I’m not just Aki-kun’s older sister, I’m your guardian too.”

Since you’re my ane-san and guardian, you shouldn’t be saying things like ‘kiss you’, right?

“Anyway, are you reflecting on this?”

“Yes, I’m thoroughly reflecting on them.”

“From today onwards, you shall follow the rules of society and study hard like a good student, okay?”

“Yes, I’ll study hard.”

“Will you live a healthy and orderly normal lifestyle?”

“Yes, I’ll live a healthy and orderly lifestyle.”

“Is ane-san the person you love the most in this world?”

“No, not to that extent.”

“…”

“OW! IT HURTS! ANE-SAN…! A SLAP’S REALLY…!”

“But you…really, Aki-kun’s troubles are really bothering me…”

“That’s not true. I’ll live my life seriously like a good student.”

“Really? Then why do you want to take back these ero-books?”

“Eh? Because these are reference books.”

“…”

“OW! IT HURTS! ANE-SAN…! AN ELBOW TO THE MOUTH IS TOO…!”

“Here, Aki-kun. Hold this too.”

“Yes…”

On a warm and sunny Saturday, as my reference books (Ero-books) were discovered, I was forced to accompany ane-san on a shopping trip as a gofer as punishment.

“Uu…it’s really heavy…”

“It won’t be considered punishment if it’s light.”

Though we’re shopping, ane-san wasn’t buying things girls like to buy, like clothes or little ornaments, but daily necessities and electrical appliances. Thus, the trolley in front of me is really heavy.

“That’s right, ane-san, why did you buy the steam oven?”

I looked at the largest electrical appliance in the trolley as I asked ane-san.

Don’t we have one at home already?

“I just like the exterior design of it. I don’t intend to use it for something.”

Ane-san's answer really puzzled me. She just liked the exterior design? Would people deliberately spend money to buy a steam oven? Ah, I got it. Speaking of which, I think the TV program I saw yesterday introduced some 'simple and delicious baked cheese and chicken '. The method is to put the cheese and tomato paste on the chicken breast, steam it, and finally, add some lime or lemon juice on it to add to the flavor…That's really a simple and delicious meal.

"I guess. The exterior design's really nice."

"Yes, I like it too."

Actually, this dish doesn't need a steam bowl to make, since the normal microwave in our house can do the job as well…but I guess I shouldn't tell ane-san after all. It's rare that she wants to cook.

Seeing ane-san working so hard, I really want to smile, but just when I was thinking about that, ane-san put fingers below her chin and muttered to herself while pondering.

"…The ingredients required are lime and cheese, and…"

So she wants to get the ingredients for the baked cheese and chicken. The ingredients listed on the program were lime, cheese, tomato paste and chicken breasts, four items—

"…Pig's blood and chicken breast…" Uh oh. This person must have mistaken pig's blood for tomato paste.

"Erm, well…ane-san…"

"…Lime, cheese, pig's blood and chicken breast…"

Ane-san continued to focus on those ingredients as she ignored my voice completely. Really, even if ane-san wants to cook something and hide it from me, at least she should note down what ingredients she needs.

"Ane-san!"

I tried to call ane-san again. This time, she finally noticed me.

“Ahh, sorry, I was thinking about something. Is there something?”

Ane-san deliberately acted as if there was nothing wrong.

Since she wanted to work hard alone, I should pretend that nothing happened. However, I have to find a way to tell her the difference between pig’s blood and tomato paste.

“It’s a little sudden, but the red of the meat sauce is made from tomato paste. Do you know that?”

“Tomato paste?”

“Un, the type where they boil and press through.”

That’s definitely not the red made from pig’s blood.

“I see. I really had a lesson today.”

“Ahaha, that’s because ane-san lacks knowledge about cooking.”

I laughed as I ended the topic about food.

I gave a hint already; will ane-san realize that the red from that dish wasn’t from pig’s blood but from tomato paste?

“Let me see…the ingredients are lime, cheese, pig’s blood and—shears.”

DAMN IT! NOW SHE MISTOOK CHICKEN BREAST FOR METAL BAT BECAUSE HER ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED!

They sound similar to chicken breast[7], but ane-san’s really scary for mixing food and metal up. Looks like I have to remind her first.

“An, and also, ane-san…shears are metallic. They’re not ingredients.”

“Of course. Shears are to be used for cutting metal boards or metallic wires. They contain metal, but they’re different from the types humans need. Besides, the metals the human body needs to take in, iron, zinc and magnesium, and these aren’t to be consumed directly through the mouth.”

“U, un, that’s right. So please don’t treat shears as an ingredient.”

Ahh…I chose to say so much at this time. Now she would choose lime, cheese, tomato paste and chicken breast, right…

“Let me see. The ingredients are knives, beef, pig’s blood and shears…”

It’s over. These things can’t be used to cook baked cheese and chicken, but an unbelievable murder scene!

“Ane-san…I, I want to have chicken for dinner tonight. Can we buy lime, cheese, tomato paste and chicken breast…”

“I don’t mind, but what do you want to do with these ingredients?”

I really want to return those words back to you!

“Anyway, can we go to a supermarket first?”

“Okay, but before we leave this place, I want to check out the hardware area.”

“No need for that. We definitely won’t need to use hardware as ingredients.”

I forcefully grabbed ane-san’s hand, pushed the extremely heavy trolley with one hand and headed to the cashier.

Even if ane-san’s a real idiot at cooking, at least she wouldn’t put hardware into food…but a little added security won’t hurt. Besides, this is heavily related to my life.

“Oh yes, Aki-kun. Once we’re done with the shopping in the supermarket, can you follow ane-san to buy some underwear?”

“Eh…that, that’s a little…”

Even though we’re family, I can’t just accompany ane-san to an underwear shop! No, it’s because we’re family that I can’t go there with her. To this ane-san of mine who lacks common sense, the underwear shop may be just one stop on a shopping trip, but to me, that’s a shameless game. I can’t agree to that no matter what.

“You don’t want to?”

“I’m a guy after all. If it’s not urgent, you can go on your own, ane-san.”

“Sorry, but I really need it.”

“Heh? Really?”

“Yes, actually, before I bathed this morning, I took all my underwear to wash.”

She washed all her underwear before bathing? And now she needs to buy some urgently. Don’t tell me it’s because…

“Ho, hold on a minute! Don’t tell me, below ane-san’s clothing—”

“Are you talking about the underwear? If that, then I definitely—zchuu!”

“THEN WHAT!? WHAT’S AFTER ‘DEFINITELY’!?”

“Ara, this alarm clock’s really cute.”

“I DON’T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ALARM CLOCK! HURRY UP AND ANSWER MY QUESTION! ARE YOU ‘WEARING IT’ OR ‘NOT WEARING IT’!? I HAVE TO USE THIS ANSWER TO DECIDE WHETHER I SHOULD TREAT MY OLDER SISTER AS A PERVERT!!”

Ane-san, treat it as I’m begging you. Please answer ‘I’m wearing’! Or else I’m going to be labeled the ungodly title of a ‘pervert’s little brother’!

“Of course I ‘wore it before’.”

“THERE’S A PERVERT HERE!!!”

PAST TENSE! WHY MUST IT BE THE PAST TENSE! IT’S A GOOD THING SHE’S WEARING PANTS NOW, OR ELSE I WOULD HAVE FAINTED IF SHE’S WEARING A SKIRT!

“You’re really noisy, Aki-kun. Don’t you feel ashamed at all?”

“NO! SHOULDN’T ANE-SAN BE ASHAMED ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER!?”

I WANT TO RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY FROM THIS PERSON HERE!

“Aki-kun, I was just joking.”

“Eh…joking?”

“Yes. Since I’ve been scolding you a lot recently, I thought I should joke around with you for a bit to ease your feelings.”

Ane-san smiled as she said that. That was a joke? I really couldn’t laugh at that one…I nearly believed it!

“Did I scare you?”

“More than scared, I think it was more like ‘so it was like that’ feeling…”

“How rude. Wouldn’t ane-san be like a pervert if you put it that way?”

“The ‘like’ is unnecessary, but it doesn’t matter now…”

Anyway, at least I can finally heave a sigh of relief and continue shopping.

After buying everything I need and settling the bill, the shop assistant passed me a few coupons. What are these?

“Are these lottery coupons? That’s great, Aki-kun.”

“Ah, yes.”

It seemed that as this was the 7th anniversary of the shop’s opening, so I could get lottery tickets once I bought a certain amount of stuff. Really, it feels like I earned something when I don’t even know of it.

“Then let’s go try it.”

“It’ll be great if we can draw something.”

After letting the shop assistant put aside our stuff for safekeeping, ane-san and I walked towards the the lottery area near the cashier. There were about 10 people queuing up for the lottery, and the shop assistants were dressed in traditional festive clothing in front of the lottery booth, shouting energetically.

“Congratulations customer! You've won the 4th prize, '3,000 yen worth of metal bats'!”

I guess any ordinary person who won this prize would be thinking that they didn't win anything at all.

“Dear customers, please don't be discouraged. The top prize '100,000 yen worth of metal bats' and special prize '500,000 yen worth of metal bats' weren't drawn yet!”

What's going on with this shop? Are there no other prizes other than metal bats? Did they not check on the customers' needs? Even the delinquents from the countryside don't need that many metal bats, right? Just when I was ready to leave the queue waiting for the lottery, I noticed the other prizes.

5th prize: Udzuki onsen 2-person's chalet ticket.

6th prize: Seafood deluxe set.

7th prize: 10,000 yen worth of shopping vouchers.

Shouldn't these prizes be in the front.

“There seemed to be a lot of prizes.”

“It's great if we could get those shopping vouchers before we bought these.”

The onsen chalet trip that was designated as the 5th prize seemed to be the biggest. On thinking about, that customer who got 4th prize just gave a wry smile and left without accepting the prize.

“It'll be great if we could draw the onsen chalet trip.”

“That should be for couples, right?”

“Really? I think that it's alright for us siblings to go there.”

Go for an onsen bath with ane-san? That sounds good. Soak in an onsen, eat

delicious food, now that will be wonderful. I also want to take my hardworking ane-san to an onsen everyday.

“Here's the coupons, ane-san.”

“Nope. Aki-kun, you can draw them all. Ane-san will just watch from the sidelines.”

“Eh? Is that good?”

“Un. I'll be watching.”

As ane-san refused, the 10 tries were in my hand. Okay, I have to get the 5th prize no matter what!

After queuing for a while, the person in front of me got some tissue paper and left. It's now my turn.

“Will the next customer step up please~”

“Sorry to bother you.”

I handed the tickets to the assistant in charge of the lottery, and put my hand onto the handle of the spinning lottery press.

“1, 2, 3...10 tickets altogether. You can draw 10 times.”

I close my eyes and concentrate. Here I go!

Tissue, tissue, metal bat, tissue, tissue, tissue, tissue, metal bat, tissue...

What the heck! Drawing the 4th prize occasionally made me really mad.

Standing in front of the small pile of tissues (naturally, I refused the metal bats), and took a deep breath.

“The final chance...watch me!”

I forcefully spun the lottery press for the last time, and the press let out sounds of little beads colliding. I spun it hard, and saw a blue bead drop out from the hole. Oh? What prize will this ball be?

“Congratulations, dear customer! You have won the 6th prize, the seafood deluxe set!”

The shop assistant took the bell that was beside the lottery press and shook it. RING! Oh! The seafood deluxe set! Now I really got a huge prize!

“The seafood deluxe set can be prepared for you immediately. Do you want to bring it back, or should we deliver it to your residence?”

The shop assistant asked me. What should I do?

The seafood deluxe set looks really heavy, and if possible, I hope that they would deliver it to my house. But in that case, I have to wait till tomorrow to receive it. It's rare that ane-san will be resting at home tomorrow. If I bring it home today, I can prepare a sumptuous meal for ane-san.

“I'll bring it back then.”

“Okay.”

I did intend on borrowing a trolley from them to bring the steam oven back. Now I might as well bring the seafood deluxe set home.

“Wow, the 6th set's already so good.”

A customer who was watching from afar let out this sound. I see, so that's the aim of this shop. If that customer queued up and saw the list of prizes, he would feel the same as me. Thinking about these useless things, I dumped everything we bought just now onto the trolley and turned to leave this shop.

“Akihisa-kun?”

“Hm?”

On our way home, I was pushing the trolley forward, only for someone behind me to call my name. Who's that?

“Ara, isn't that Mizuki-san? Hello.”

“Hello, Akira-san, Akihisa-kun.”

“Hello, Himeji-san.”

I turned around to look, and standing in front of us was Himeji-san, who was giving off a girlish presence with her neon green top and skirt. The comfortable looking casual clothes looks cute on her.

“Akihisa-kun, did you come out to shop today?”

“Ah, yes.”

The trolley I'm pushing now has a steam oven, some daily necessities and the seafood deluxe set just now. Speaking of which, we really bought a lot of things today.

“Wow...you bought a lot of things. Are you going to cook a feast?”

“No. Aki-kun won it in a lucky draw.”

Ane-san said as she pointed at the Styrofoam boxes that had all sorts of seafood inside. After seeing so many things, anyone would definitely think that there's a feast or something.

“Oh yes, Mizuki-san, where are you going?”

“I'm going to buy ingredients for dinner.”

As she said that, Himeji-san raised the bag she had in her hand slightly. It's really like Himeji-san to prepare her own bag when buying things.

“Speaking of which, you're in charge of dinner tonight, Mizuki-san?”

“Yes. I'm in charge of dinner, but daddy and mommy are out, so I'm just making my own share.”

Oh yes, I think I remember now. Himeji-san's a lone daughter.”

“You're having dinner alone, Mizuki-san? Will your parents be back late?”

“Ah, yes. They went to attend a friend's wedding far away, so they will be back late.”

Speaking of which, Himeji-san can only watch the house alone before her parents come back. I've often heard some shocking social news these days, so it's worrying that a girl's watching home alone.

Just when I thought about that, ane-san seemed to think the same thing. She asked Himeji-san,

“Mizuki-san, in that case, why don't you have dinner with us?”

“Eh?”

Himeji-san couldn't help but blink.

“It's too dangerous for a girl to be alone. How can I leave you like that after knowing your situation?”

“Eh? But that's...”

“Come along, Himeji-san. I just happened to win a seafood deluxe set. It's impossible for ane-san and me to finish all these up.”

As expected of a prize that's used for a lucky draw, the seafood deluxe set was too much. Raw seafood can't be kept for too long. It'll be great if Himeji-san can come over to help finish the food.

“I'll be bothering you in that case...”

“No need to worry. We don't feel bothered at all.”

“That's right. We can't finish that much seafood, so just come over and help us finish it up.”

Ane-san and I try our best to persuade Himeji-san, who's been refusing us,

“The, then I'll help myself then...”

Now Himeji-san finally nodded her head and agreed. Good, very good. It's rare to get good ingredients. If Himeji-san would come over to enjoy this food, it would be all the more reason why I should show off my skills. I must do my best today and make a good meal for ane-san and Himeji-san.

That's right, that's what I intended.

“Well, Akihisa-kun...”

“Hm? Himeji-san, what is it?”

“Since I'm going to your house, then, at least let me prepare dinner for tonight.”

But the situation developed in a bad way.

“Wha, wha what are you saying, Himeji-san? Ho, how, how, how can I let the guest do this?”

“But if I don't do so, I'll feel really bothered...”

But if I let you prepare dinner, my life will be at stake!

“Think about it, you're definitely not used to the utensils and stuff in my house, so you may get hurt accidentally...I think it's better to leave it to me—”

“In that case, I'll bring my utensils over.”

“No no no. There's no need for such trouble. I'll handle dinner tonight.”

“No, Akihisa-kun cooked for us when we went to your house for the study meeting. So it's my turn to cook.”

Himeji-san sounded gentle, but nobody can change her will.

Just when I was really exasperated over this and wondering how I should advise her from cooking—

“Okay, okay, you two, knock it off. In that case...”

Ane-san spoke up to stop us. Has she thought of a good idea?

“—In that case, both sides should step aside. Tonight's dinner will be prepared by Mizuki-san and me. How about it?”

“THAT'S THE WORST POSSIBLE SITUATION I COULD THINK OF!!!”

THERE'S ONE MORE KILLER COOK HERE!

What should I say? This situation is completely out of my control!

“Akira-san and I will be making dinner tonight? In that case...”

Himeji-san didn't refuse ane-san's proposal. I'm begging you, Himeji-san! You should insist on your own thoughts!

“We, well, you two...I don't mean it that way...”

“Then it's decided, Mizuki-san, I'll hope to learn from you later.”

“Ye, yes. I'll be in your care, Akira-san.”

Not good. They're not listening to me at all.

“I'll get the ingredients now.”

“Ahh! Himeji-san hold on!”

Himeji-san never even listened to me as I tried to stop her, and hurriedly ran to a nearby pharmacy. EEEHHH!? ISN'T SHE GOING TO BUY INGREDIENTS!? WHY MUST SHE HEAD TO THE PHARMACY!? ISN'T THIS TOO WEIRD!?

“Okay, I should get some ingredients too.”

After saying that, ane-san went off to the store. That's too weird! Why are these two's basic sense in 'food' completely wrong!?

“...”

After both of them left, I was left alone with the trolley.

A combination of Himeji-san and ane-san...to be honest, I don't think I can stop

them.

My mind suddenly remembered the terrifying feeling when I was forced fed with Himeji-san's rice balls.

The scene of Yuuji and Muttsurini betraying and stuffing the poison into my mouth flashed in my mind.

Why must I get stuck in this painful experience I had to go through? I shouldn't be the only victim, it's time for Yuuji and Muttsurini to suffer.

After thinking for a while, I finally came to a conclusion.

In that case, I'll at least,

“Uu, phone, phone...”

I took my handphone out from my pocket and searched out my bad friend's number.

“Hello? Is that Yuuji? I won something good in a lucky draw, but it's impossible for ane-san and me to finish them up, so—”

At least I can get a few bad-lucked people to die with me. Good friends are to go through thick and thin together.

“Akihisa, we're here~”

Yuuji's voice came from the speaker. I'm really touched that he came here as promised.

“Welcome. You guys all came over.”

I opened the corridor entrance and welcomed everyone. Once the door opened, I found my usual good friends, Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini standing at a door.

“It's rare that you'll have such good stuff. I'm somewhat feeling sorry for just coming here to eat.”

“It feels a little thick-skinned for me, but I'm rather happy to enjoy a bowl of soup.”

“...I'm looking forward to eat.”

“There's too much here, so it's a great help that you guys could help finish it with me.”

Even with so many people, there's still enough food. They didn't need to mind at all.

“Sorry for intruding.”

“Same here, sorry to bother you.”

“...Excuse me.”

“Here here, hurry up and come in.”

I tilted my body aside and let them into the house, put my hand behind the door to close it, and didn't forget to lock it.

“Mu? What's wrong? Is there a need to lock the door?” “Ahaha, security's been bad recently.”

For added precaution, I hooked like the chain lock on the door. This move is extremely important, enough to delay them long enough when they run away.

“...Akihisa, I'm starting to get a bad feeling about this.”

Yuuji, who was standing at the front porch, seems to be hesitating over whether he should move forward.

“As expected of Yuuji, your primitive instincts are as sharp as ever.”

“What do you mean, Akihisa and Yuuji? Didn't we come here to enjoy a seafood meal? It's not like we're having some poisonous meal—”

As Hideyoshi spoke halfway, the door leading to the living room opened.

The person who appeared in front of us was...

“Ah, Sakamoto-kun, Kinoshita-kun, Tsuchiya-kun, hello.”

Dressed in an apron, the killer cook, Himeji-san was standing there.

“...UU!!”

“You're running away?”

Yuuji immediately turned around and tried to run to the corridor, but having expected this, I raised my leg, BAM, and hit it low against the wall of the front porch to block Yuuji's escape.

“A, Akihisa, you bastard!”

“Yuuji, it's now a one way trip to Hell. Don't think you can escape!”

Nobody's going think of escaping this trip to Hell. If we must curse, we shall curse all you people who came here excitedly thinking that you're going to enjoy a great meal!

“A, Akihisa! Don't you find that doing this to your friends is too cruel!? I was wrong about you!”

“...(Nods head frantically)!”

Hideyoshi and Muttsurini looked sad and angry. That's right, every guy present here knew the terror of Himeji-san's cooking, so it's expected that they would have this kind of response. However...

“It's alright, I understand. Even though you guys say so, you guys aren't willing to see me suffer on my own, right? Shouldn't we go through thick and thin as friends?”

I trust this group of guys.

“You could have just died alone!”

“I don't think anyone who'll do this is a friend!”

“...The Devil!”

The completely dishonest friends actually said such heartfelt words. How stupid. Even if they said so, I have picked up the true feelings you people couldn't hide at all.

(((Akihisa, we'll kill you...)))

You guys will die together with me!

“Akihisa, you bastard. You're thinking about taking revenge for that incident during the sports meeting, right?”

“...Too heinous!”

“That has nothing to do with me, right?”

To be honest, I was hesitating over whether I should have gotten Hideyoshi involved in this, However, we're a four man gang with a great relationship with each other. I really couldn't bring myself to exclude Hideyoshi.

“Ara? Sakamoto, you guys are here? Hurry up and come in.”

Just when I was quarrelling with Yuuji and the rest, ane-san come over from the kitchen.

“There's really too much seafood, so I called everyone to come over to finish this.”

“This idea's not bad.”

With so many people eating, the serving each person will have will reduce a lot. If the situation's good, maybe I could save my precious life.

“In that case, shall we call Minami-san, Shouko-san and Aiko-san over for dinner? Everyone played together at the seaside before. It's not too bad to invite them over, right?”

“Eh? Can I?” As ane-san said a lot of vicious words before, I thought that she would be really angry if I called other girls over, especially since I got those secret reference books confiscated from me. I have to be especially careful now.

“You can. After seeing Aki-kun's actions, I should...perhaps ane-san restricted you too much and caused a negative effect. You can invite girls to our house to play as long as ane-san's around.”

Ohh! An unexpectedly happy outcome even after she found so many reference books. That's great!

“But your life will be in danger if there's any lewd things like physical contact or peeping. You have to remember that.”

“Un, I can expect that without ane-san reminding me.”

Of course, I knew that my ane-san isn't going to say such nice things.

“Yuuji, can you call Kirishima-san?”

“Ah, I remember she said that she had something on today...”

“I called Shouko-chan already. She said that she'll be here in a while.”

“That's too fast already, Himeji!”

Then, we confirmed that Minami and Kudou-san were alright. Now the members of the 2 day 1 night seaside trip are all gathered together.

“Oi, Akihisa, what do we do now?”

“Even if you ask me, I...”

Yuuji, who's sitting on the sofa in the living room, raised his chin to point at the kitchen. I wanted to enter the kitchen to invigilate to prevent them from adding some suspicious things into the food, but ane-san and Himeji-san chased me out

with the reason that 'the kitchen's a woman's battlefield'. It would be an apt description if this can be used to measure the number of casualties.

“Well, Akihisa-kun...”

“Hm? Wha, what is it, Himeji-san?”

Himeji-san poked her head out from the kitchen. What happened?

“I'm looking for something...”

Something? Ahh, I got it. Since it's someone else's kitchen, Himeji-san probably doesn't know where the utensils or seasonings are at. And besides, ane-san doesn't cook often, so of course she doesn't know.

“Ok, what are you looking for?”

I nodded my head and got up as I prepared to head to the kitchen. What does she want? A steamer to steam prawns or oyster? Or a large pot to boil soup—

“Actually...I'm looking for instant glue.”

At this moment, the very definition of food crumbled from the base up.

“Not good...I'll definitely die here today...”

“Damn it...I still have lots of things I haven't done yet...”

“...I want to live, live a little longer!”

On hearing Himeji-san's words, a burial-like atmosphere started to swarm around my bad friends. Everyone, don't give up! Now that we know of the existence of instant glue in this, we can find a way to avoid this tragedy!

Thus, I told Himeji-san in a warning tone.

“We, well...Himeji-san, I guess you should be clear that you can kill people if you add instant glue into food. It's really dangerous—”

“What are you saying, Akihisa-kun? Wouldn't it be bad if I add instant glue into the food?”

Himeji-san looked puzzled as she answered. Wha, what, so it wasn't to be added into the food...

“Tha, that's right. It'll be bad if you add instant glue into food! Everyone knows that!”

“Yes. Fufu, Akihisa-kun's really weird.”

On seeing that Himeji-san's smiling, the burial-like atmosphere in the living room gradually vanished. That's great. Since Himeji-san still had such common sense, there should be no problems, right?

I heaved a sigh of relief, and now, there's only a little doubt in my head. Hm? In that case...

“Why do you need instant glue?”

“Ahh, I wanted to make French seafood stew, but the pressure cooker broke right down the middle, so—”

“““I'M GOING BACK!!!”””

“ARGH! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! DON'T YOU DARE ESCAPE!”

Damn it, these idiots are leaving me behind!!

I chased after them to prevent them from leaving the trip to Hell. However, Yuuji opened the door and was about to run outside—

“...Why must you leave when I just arrived?”

“UWAAAHHH!! PLEASE, SHOUKO! LET GO OF ME!”

The moment he stepped out of the house, Yuuji was caught and grabbed tightly by Kirishima-san, who just arrived.

“Kinoshita, Tsuchiya, where are you going?”

“Muttsurini-kun, even if I'm here, you don't have to be so embarrassed that you must leave, right?”

Hideyoshi, and Muttsurini were cut off too. Such idiots, leaving me behind and running away? Things aren't that simple.

“Minami, Kirishima-san, Kudou-san, welcome. Here here, hurry and come in.”

“““Pardon us for intruding.”””

Yuuji was long caught in Kirishima-san’s grasp, and I grabbed Hideyoshi and Muttsurini’s hands tightly and dragged them back into the house. The trio who were brought back looked like prisoners who failed in their prison break.

“Aki, here’s a souvenir.”

“…I brought a little something from my house to Akira-san.”

“I brought something too.”

The girls all brought different gifts. Actually, they didn’t need to spend so much effort, but in this situation, they aren’t as used to this place as Yuuji, who I knew for quite a while.

“I’m really grateful to you people.”

I thanked them as I received their gifts. Besides the fruits like oranges and grapefruit, Kirishima-san gave me what looked like some high-class grape wine in a wooden box. I have to be careful not to let Himeji-san or Kirishima-san drink this wine…

Everyone walked into the living room. Would it be too packed with too many people here?

“Ah, everyone’s here. Hello.”

“Welcome.”

Ane-san and Himeji-san invited everyone in. Minami and the rest greeted them, and everyone randomly chose a seat.

“Mizuki, what did you intend to do?”

Minami sat on the sofa and asked Himeji-san.

“I wanted to make French seafood stew, but…”

“But what?”

“I failed a little, so I have to redo it again…”

Himeji-san muttered sadly.

Who would have thought that the ‘little failure’ Himeji-san said would be a complete destruction of the pressure cooker?

“Arre, Mizuki, don't be so disheartened. Anyone can fail.”

“...Failure's the mother of success.”

“I don't really understand cooking, but you can definitely succeed next time.”

The girls encouraged Himeji-san in an understanding manner. I really want to encourage her too, but if it's cooking, I may end up endangering my own life if I say something wrong. I guess I better watch myself and be quiet.

“But there's no time. How can we prepare such food now that needs such a long time to prepare...”

Himeji-san said in regret. At this moment, Kudou-san look around at everyone and suggested,

“In that case, why don't we have hotpot?”

“Eh? You're saying...hotpot?”

Yeah. We have so many people, so a hotpot based on seafood should be good. There's no need to spend too much time preparing the food, and everyone can enjoy it. The problem is—

“Hotpot? I understand, I'll prepare it now.”

The problem is that this hotpot's going to be made from the hands of a killer chef.

“Ah, Himeji. Hotpot's my speciality, so just leave it to—”

“No, Sakamoto-kun, you and the rest can just wait for the start of the meal!”

Yuuji's proposal was instantly rejected.

“But Himeji, you just need to boil the soup for hotpot.”

“Why is Kinoshita-kun saying that as well? The soup's very important.”

It seems like she's determined to prepare dinner no matter what as she wasn't letting us guys help. Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini were chased out of the kitchen by her. Uu...now, what do we do...

“How about we have some dark hotpot?”

At this moment, ane-san suddenly raised this mysterious proposal in a mindless manner.

“Dark hotpot?”

“Yes. I heard that amongst all hotpots, the dark hotpot's the best kind.”

“No, ane-san, that's...”

That's not true—just when I was about to say this, I suddenly thought.

Hold on...this may be a good idea!

Even if us guys stand up and say that we can prepare a dish in a short time, Himeji-san will feel troubled and would insist on cooking. As long as Himeji-san's around, it'll be futile no matter what kind of food we cook.

But it'll be different if it's dark hotpot. Since we're going to add all our current ingredients, it will have nothing to do with Himeji-san's help. If it has nothing to do with her own culinary skills, she can't possibly create some dangerous dish. Maybe...maybe we can really come back safely!

I shot a glance at Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini. They seemed to have the same idea as well as everyone gave the same look. No matter what, we have to make this dark hotpot the dinner for tonight. Great! Then it's decided!

“Well...Akira-san, dark hotpot's a little different from a normal hotpot...”

“This idea's good! I think that the dark hotpot's a rather good suggestion!”

“That's right! Dark hotpot's the hotpot amongst hotpots!”

“...Dark hotpot's the best!”

“As expected of ane-san! This is really great!”

We shouted out in agreement and deliberately shut off Minami's voice. It's definitely the correct choice to have dark hotpot today. It's not our bad intentions; this is for Minami's precious life's sake as well!

“I'm interested in dark hotpot as well, and I've never tried it before.”

“...Me too. It doesn't seem to be a bad idea to try it out.”

Kudou-san and Kirishima-san added on. You two really helped out a lot!

“Ah, but our house doesn't have a cassette gas stove...”

At this point, I finally remembered something important. My house's cassette gas stove was spoilt a while back, and we haven't bought a new one since then. But this is a life-and-death situation. It seems that I can only ask ane-san to buy one...

“Akihisa-kun, I can get a cassette gas stove from my house if you need to. My house's nearby anyway.”

“Eh? Really?”

“Of course. I intend to bring some other things over as well, so I can bring them all in one go.”

Himeji-san proposed happily. In that case, I'll just ask her to bring it over.

“Then, before Mizuki comes back, I'll make a few appetisers. Aki, can I use these ingredients?”

“Mn, you can.”

Minami asked as she pointed at the box with lots of seafood inside. This is really a proposal I really wanted. It's rare to have so many good ingredients, so it's a waste to use them for the dark hotpot.

“...In that case, I'll help out as well.”

“I'll help out too~”

After Minami said so, Kirishima-san and Kudou-san followed. I don't know how's Kirishima-san's culinary skills, but since Yuuji didn't stop her, at least it won't be fatal. Kudou-san definitely won't add some weird things inside as well, so there shouldn't be any problems with leaving it to them.

“Minami-chan, I might need to spend some time, so if you need to do something, you can start on your own without me.”

“Is that so? I understand then.”

“I'm going back then.”

After Himeji-san said that to Minami, she ran towards the entrance in small steps.

“I'll prepare the soup base for the dark hotpot then.”

“A, ane-san! I'll boil the soup base later, so just sit over and rest for a while!”

I continued to try and stop ane-san, who intended to walk to the kitchen.

In the end, Minami, Kirishima-san and Kudou-san all entered the kitchen. Himeji-san went back home to get some stuff, and the rest are just waiting for the execution in the living room.

“Everyone, sorry to keep you waiting. The appetiser's done.”

“...Sorry for keeping you waiting for so long.”

After we waited in the living room, Minami and Kirishima-san brought a large plate as they walked towards us. What kind of appetiser did they prepare for us?

“As there's grape wine, we tried to make seafood cold dish.”

“““WWOOOOHHH!!!”””

The entire plate was filled with fresh fish, and the fish was surrounded with lush green vegetables. There's also the beautiful lines of sauce on it. This fish should be the one drawn from the lucky draw, right? I remember that this fish wasn't sliced...

“Minami, did you slice this fish?”

“No, I was in charge of the sauce and the arrangement. The fish was—”

“I sliced it.”

“Wow, so Kirishima-san did that?”

The fish that was arranged aren't inferior to the sashimi sold outside, as every single piece was sliced to perfection. I had never known that Kirishima-san can cook.

“...Because this is a part a bride has to learn.”

Kirishima-san explained shyly.

I see. She always dreamt of being a bride when she was young, so she worked hard to learn how to be a good wife. Kirishima-san's really hardworking, and passionately devoted.

“There's sashimi, steamed oysters and seafood salad~!”

Then, Kudou-san served up a large plate. The plate has steamed oysters with the

shells on and a salad that's laced with shrimp and cuttlefish.

“But then again, I was just in charge of washing the vegetable and arranging the dish~”

“No no no, this is already impressive enough.”

There's such appetizing food on the table. The most important thing about eating seafood is the freshness, and we have to savor the food before the cold dish becomes warm.

“Well, it's a bit bad to Mizuki, but we better start first.”

Minami took off the apron and then sat on the carpet. Kirishima-san and Kudou-san found their seats as well.

“Shouldn't we wait for Himeji-san.”

“We can wait for her...but if we do that, Mizuki will be troubled that she kept us waiting. That's her personality after all.”

“That's true. Himeji-san did say that 'you can start first' before she left. I think we should just follow what Minami said.

“Then, I'm a little sorry to Mizuki, but let's tuck in.”

“Let's have a toast first then. Didn't Kirishima-san just give us a bottle of grape wine? Why don't you open it and drink it, ane-san?”

I don't really understand wine, but since it's white grape wine that's iced, it should be suitable to go along with these dishes.

“That's true, but it's a little awkward when I'm the only one drinking.”

“It couldn't be helped then. We're all underaged here.”

“Yeah. Why don't we replace wine with juice?”

“Ah, Kinoshita, hold on a minute! We just prepared some drink as well. I'll bring them over.”

Minami said as she stood up. Speaking of which, she just borrowed a juice blender from me. So she wanted to make fruit juice.

“Here we here. This is my specially-made fresh fruit juice.”

Minami took out a few glasses of fruit juice from the kitchen. They sure looks good. Minami herself said that she had no confidence in cooking, but she should be rather good at that, right?

“Then, cheers!”

“““Cheers!”””

After everyone called out 'cheers' in unison, I slowly brought the cup to my mouth. The sweet and sour taste of the freshly squeezed juice is about to reach my mouth. This glass of fruit juice should have lots of assorted fruits in them, and I smelt lots of different aromas in my nose. It's rare to get a chance to drink freshly squeezed juice. I have to enjoy this.

Tilting the glass, I took a sip of fruit juice and swirled it with my tongue twice. The fruit juice in my mouth let out a rather familiar taste, but it was a taste I never tried before.

The strong taste that's full of intensity.

“....”

The intense flavor of...Tabasco.

“IT'S HOT! IT'S TOO SPICY! ARE YOU DELIBERATELY BULLYING ME NOW!?”

It was so hot that I couldn't help but roll on the floor. Why must Minami do such a cruel thing!?

“Because my hand naturally reached for the Tabasco the moment I thought of Aki.”

“What? So Akihisa's drink was the only special one.”

“Shimada's really thoughtful about Akihisa.”

“...It couldn't be helped that your hand naturally reached over.”

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY IT COULDN'T BE HELPED! AND THIS SORT OF GIRL'S ROMANCE THINGY ISN'T CUTE AT ALL!”

“I was too careless! So tonight's enemy isn't just Himeji-san!

Anyway, get me something I can drink! Hurry up and give me something I can drink!

“Yuuji! Hand me your fruit juice!”

“No can do, Akihisa. Wouldn't it be an indirect kiss if I let you drink my fruit juice?”

“What are you saying now!? You don't care about this in the past, right?”

This damned bastard! He must be feeling happy after seeing me in such pain, right!?

“Th, then, Muttsurini can do too!”

“...I refuse.”

“Wait a second! Muttsurini, have you been deliberately keeping your distance from me recently!?”

That was a misunderstanding! I was only joking when I said that Muttsurini looked cute in a girl's outfit during the sports meeting!

How about Hideyoshi...but this will really end up being an indirect kiss. This won't do. And I can't drink the other girls' drinks!

“Aki-kun, what's wrong?”

At this moment, ane-san said to me in the same calm tone as ever. Damn it, I don't care whether she's my ane-san at this time! I'm facing an emergency here!

“Ane-san, get me something to drink now!!”

“A drink? I got it.”

After saying that, ane-san gulped down the glass of wine in her hand. No, wait, you're mistaken, ane-san! I didn't ask you to drink—eh?

“NOOOOOO!!!”

Ane-san suddenly grabbed my head, and her face gradually closed in on me. Hold on a minute! What is ane-san intending to do!

“(Gulp) Didn't you want to drink?”

“I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO FEED ME WITH YOUR MOUTH!!!”

What is ane-san thinking! Will she really make me drink with her mouth if I don't resist?

“I...I see...feeding through the mouth...”

“Oi, Shouko, hold it right there! Don't slip the Tabasco into my drink.”

Unable to do anything else, I could only groan as I ran to the kitchen, gulp a large mouthful of clean water to wash the terrifying Tabasco taste away. Really, Minami actually did such a terrifying thing! Now I can't taste the delicious looking dishes on the table now!

After rinsing my mouth a few times, I silently wait for the intense taste in my mouth to fade away. At this moment, Minami brought a cup over as she approached me.

“Here, Aki, this is your real fruit juice.”

“Eh? Oh, thanks.”

I received the cup Minami passed to me and timidly took a sip out of it. This cup doesn't have any strange taste inside; it's a fruit punch with a nice sweet taste.

Minami watched me as I enjoyed the fruity taste, and gave a smirk of mischief.

“Aki, have you reflected on it?”

“Hm? What?”

Reflected? Did I do something bad? I don't remember doing anything to Minami...

“Really, I can tell from your expression that you don't understand what I'm talking about, right?”

“Muu...sorry.”

“Oh well, it's not like Aki's slow-wittedness isn't some rare thing. Really, I'll just tell you then. What made me angry was that—”

Minami pointed at me, puffed her cheeks slightly and pouts,

“—You actually asked Mizuki out first and not me!”

“Eh?”

Unexpectedly, this was what Minami said. For a while, I could only react while not understanding what's going on?

Did she think that I left her out of my good friends' list? But I didn't specially ask Himeji-san alone. I just so happened to meet her on the way home after the shopping trip.

“That's how it is. It's nothing actually. Let's go back.”

“Eh? Ah, un...you're right.”

Recently, Minami seemed like she would say some things with cryptic meanings behind them. What should I say? It's like...some words that would make me have some expectations...perhaps I'm thinking too much, I guess?

I thought of this as I return back to the living room. Seeing me all teary in the eyes, Yuuji couldn't help but laugh.

“Akihisa, how was the special fruit juice? Seems like you were rather excited WWWAHHHH IT'S SPICY!!!”

However, just when Yuuji lifted his glass and took a sip, he immediately spit the

drink out.

“...Yuuji, do you want my drink?”

“DA, DAMN IT, SHOUKO! DID YOU SWITCH MY FRUIT JUICE WITH AKIHISA'S!?”

Nice going, Kirishima-san!

“Really, I say, why are you guys always so noisy.”

“...Not calm at all.”

“But I like this. I like it like this~”

On the other side, Hideyoshi, Muttsurini and Kudou-san were all watching. Kudou-san, the reason why you're so happy is because you were just watching. The bad things haven't happened to you yet.

I happily watched Yuuji suffer as he rolled on the floor in minute and returned back to my seat. At this moment, ane-san reached her hand out and tugged at my sleeve.

“Aki-kun, sit over here.”

“Eh? Ane-san?”

Damn it, is she going to tell me off again? Did I make her angry for being all noisy before we started?

“Aki-kun, sit here.”

And then, I was pressed down by ane-san onto her thighs...HOLD ON A MINUTE!

“WHA, WHAT KIND OF JOKE IS THIS, ANE-SAN! I'M ALREADY A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. FOR YOU TO HUG ME LIKE THIS IS...fuu...”

“Good, good, Aki-kun's a good kid.”

Once I'm hugged by ane-san, I'll lose all my strength.

“““…”””

Seeing me being all weak, everyone present was shocked and speechless. No, it's not like that! Everyone, don't look at me like that! I'm not in love with my sister!!!

“The foods' nice, and the wine's good.”

Ignoring everyone's gazes, ane-san continued to put the wine and food into her mouth. What's going on? I didn't notice it for a while, but how is it that the bottle's only half-filled with wine...

“Ane-san, don't tell me you're drunk?”

“Speaking of which, I may be a little drunk.”

No, it's not just 'a little'. Even if it's my ane-san, she couldn't do this in a conscious state in front of everyone. She won't do this stupid thing if she wasn't drunk to a certain extent.

“Shall I get you a glass of water?”

“I see, that's great.”

I jumped off from ane-san's thighs, went to the kitchen to fill up a glass of water, and returned back to the living room.

“Ane-san, here.”

“Thanks.”

After handing the glass of water to ane-san, I chose a seat that's furthest away from ane-san and sat down again. I won't be able to take this if she do something ridiculous in front of everyone.

Pata (the sound as ane-san got up from her seat)

Tatatatata (the sound as ane-san walked over to me)

Oumph (the sound of ane-san hugging me)

“““…”””

Everyone gave me cold observing looks.

Not good... from tomorrow onwards, my nickname will become 'siscon'.

“Sorry, I'm late—Akihisa...kun?”

“I'm sorry, Himeji-san. I understand that you may have lots of things to say, but please just imagine that you didn't see anything.”

Himeji-san brought the cassette gas stove back, and widened her eyes in shock the moment she saw me being hugged by ane-san.

In the end, until ane-san slept, everyone continued to watch me, not looking away from me at all.

“Alright, it's about time to prepare the ingredients for the hotpot.”

Himeji-san put the cassette gas stove she brought from home onto the table.

After keeping aside the appetiser, it's now time for the main course of tonight's dinner—the dark hotpot.

Like usual, allow me to explain the rules of this dark hotpot.

1.The ingredients must be edible.

2.Any food that's taken with the chopsticks must be eaten down.

3.Everyone can choose a food to put into the hotpot (except for the kelp that's used for the soup base).

Normally, we should prepare our own ingredients and thrown them in, but we didn't have much time today. Thus, we'll use all the ingredients we have at my house. At least there won't be anything deadly inside.

In other words, the only thing that will endanger our lives is—

“Oh yes, I brought some hotpot ingredients besides the gas stove☆”

—The terrifying thing that will endanger our lives is right in front of us.

Don't be careless, concentrate hard. This game is a matter of our own lives!

Himeji-san smiled as she opened a 10cm sq rectangular box. Is that the ingredient (?) she brought...

“Everyone has to choose an ingredient and put inside the hotpot. We just need to make sure not to let others see what we put in. Understand?”

“...Un, it won't be interesting if someone sees it.”

“Understood. I'll start then~”

After saying that, Kudou-san, who's the first one to put the ingredient into the hotpot, walked into the kitchen. After her were Minami and Kirishima-san.

“I'm next then.”

Hideyoshi looked somewhat nervous as he got up. After a while, he brought something back as well.

“...My turn.”

Next would be Muttsurini and Yuuji. They chose their ingredients before returning to the seat.

And now, it's my turn.

“...What kind of flavor will it turn out to be?”

“It seems a little scary.”

“Really? I'm rather looking forward to it~”

As the girls continued to talk happily without understanding the situation, I turn my back on the guys who are feeling abnormally tense, and walked towards the

kitchen.

“Let's see. What should I choose...?”

Standing in front of the basin, I pondered alone for a while.

Right now, we have to face the dark hotpot, and the action I should choose is way too simple. That's to find a way to dump the ingredient (?) Himeji-san throws in into Yuuji or Muttsurini's stomachs, that's all. Once I do this, I can let everyone else survive.

“But they must be feeling the same way as me.”

No matter whether it's Yuuji or Muttsurini or even Hideyoshi, they will think of sacrificing others to protect their own lives. They won't feel regret over protecting their own lives even if it means sacrificing their friends. That's an important lesson we learnt as we went through this path.

“Okay, first...I should check what everyone choose.”

Even though it's almost a secret as to what everyone chose, but if the stuff that was here yesterday disappeared, I will know what everyone chose. Anyway, let's start from the shelves.

—After checking through the shelves, below the basin, the seasoning rack...hmm, I got it.

The things that disappeared were—

1.Tabasco (New and completely untouched).

2.Tabasco (Opened)

3.Tabasco (Seasoning powder pack that came with pizza delivery)

“THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF IDIOTS!!!”

Unexpectedly, everyone loved chilli so much, and I couldn't help but cover my head and shout.

Why did everyone choose Tabasco!? Aren't there any other ingredients to choose

from!? What sort of weird interest is it to boil some big red soup!!!

“Akihisa-kun, what's wrong?”

On hearing my horrific cry, Himeji-san called out from the living room. This is bad, if I panic now, I'll be checkmated by them.

“Nothing. I'm alright.”

After recovering, I regain my thoughts and stood in front of the fridge.

“Yuuji and the rest must have chosen stuff from the fridge...”

I guess the people who chose Tabasco were Minami, Kirishima-san and Kudou-san. Putting Tabasco into a dark hotpot will make it some spicy and horrifying food. They chose such a shocking ingredient...most likely, they don't understand that this dark hotpot concerns life and death, and made this peaceful and casual choice. As for people like Yuuji and me, who often had to endure classes of killer cooking in our everyday lives, we wouldn't do that. As for why, that's because even if we added Tabasco, we can't save our own lives. These guys must have made this decision with the intent to make someone else other than themselves eat the ingredient Himeji-san put in. If I don't consider that, I definitely won't be able to survive after eating this dark hotpot.

I took a deep breath and reached for the handle of the fridge, opening it at one go. Let's see, what ingredients are less than before?

“—Spring onion, radish and tofu.”

In terms of ingredients, these will look like a logical choice, but there's an intent to harm others.

As for spring onion...I remember that there's a medicinal effect. In other words, the person wants to use spring onions as defense to protect his own life. Even if it's to play safe, if something really happened, he would only hope for the anti-toxin effects the spring onion brings. I see. This choice shows that even if it's only a 1% chance, he will try his best to increase his chances of surviving. From this choice that's not offensive at all, I guess Hideyoshi chose spring onion.

And now, let's think of the radish that other person took away. Looking at the

state of the vegetable knife and the basin, it doesn't seem like they were touched. In other words, the radish that were taken away will be thrown in with it's original triangular shape. I have two less radishes in my house. What's the situation? How can I use radish to let myself live if I choose it?

“Radish...not sliced...triangular-shaped...if I use it...”

I got it! He wants to use the triangular side of the radish to send the ingredient Himeji-san puts in to someone else! Considering that the hotpot's located in the middle of the table and everyone's seats, Himeji-san can't possibly reach out too far, but put the ingredient in front of her. Now the ingredient will slide to someone because of the triangular shape. He probably thought that us members of the killer cooking class would try our best not to touch such dangerous ingredients and choose to pick our own ingredient—things in our area, only for us not to notice that the dangerous ingredient Himeji-san puts in will roll into our areas. Rule two clearly states that anything we pick up with our chopsticks has to be eaten. In that case, this guy just wants the dangerous stuff to be handled by others. This guy...how did he come up with such a dangerous and offensive strategy? This method will only endanger us, who know of the terror of Himeji-san's cooking, and allow him to survive. That guy who thought of this plan must be laughing inside.

Unfortunately,

“This thinking's way too naïve...”

Thinking of such a method is too naïve, and overly stupid. As for why it's stupid, that's because this strategy only considers that what Himeji-san will put into the hotpot is a ball-shaped item.

But I'm doubting whether that's even a solid object. Didn't Himeji-san just say that before she went to get the gas stove? 'The most important thing about the hotpot's the soup base'. Based on Himeji-san's insistent personality, it's more likely that she would add some fluid that will mix the flavors in the soup base up instead of something that won't affect the hotpot. In other words, what Himeji-san will put in may be some basic ingredient like kelp that can be used for a soup base. I can understand that from the preservative container she brought from her house. The person who thought of such a surface-deep situation is way too naïve...so the radish shouldn't be taken by Yuuji. My guess is that Muttsurini

chose it.

“In that case, Yuuji chose tofu.”

In that case, I know the ingredient my greatest enemy Yuuji chose. Once I know this, I can sort of understand his strategy, and I can guess what that guy's thinking.

“In that case, I'll choose this.”

I took out that thing from the fridge and sliced it a few times with a vegetable knife.

Next, I just need to find a good place to put this thing in.

The hotpot let out a 'psst psst' sound that sounded appetizing.

The gas stove that's set right in the middle of the table had a large claypot on it. There's nothing inside the pot besides the kelp that's used as the base of the soup. I guess...the most wonderful taste of this pot will be at this moment.

“I'm turning off the lights now~”

As Himeji-san said that, pak, the room became dark. Inside the living room that had the curtains drawn, only the flames of the gas stove was swaying gently. A war is about to break loose.

“I'll put my ingredient in first~”

Kudou-san said in a cheery voice, and at the same time, she dropped something into the pot that let out a 'plop plop' sound that echoed throughout the room. Normally, I should be thinking worriedly “did she put some mochi[8] inside. No , it sounded like a fluid, so it's something else...” but I don't mind today. Besides, I'll be really happy if it was mochi.

“My turn next.”

“...Me too...”

Then, it's Minami and Kirishima-san's turn. Looking at the current situation, there wasn't anything strange inside the claypot. Tabasco? That's not scary no matter how many times I see it added in!

“It's my turn to add it in next.”

“...I'm next.”

After that, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini took action. It seemed that Hideyoshi was holding onto chopsticks as he added one thing after another, and Muttsurini stealthily added something else into the pot. I was right!

“I'm next.”

Yuuji then took out something. It seemed that he was arranging them in a line with his hands. Since he put it in with his hands, it's likely that what he chose was tofu. I'll win this time!

“I'll put mine next.”

After checking that Yuuji put in all his ingredients and retracted his hand back, I put what I chose into the pot. The reason I waited for Yuuji to stop completely was so that I can make sure that the positioning of the ingredients can't be changed through human means.

“I'm last.”

If possible, I really want to cover the pot up and treat it as if it never happened. I guess the members of the killer cooking class must be thinking the same way. But no matter how we cried or begged in our hearts, Himeji-san put what she chose into the claypot mercilessly.

Ploop, ploop...

On hearing that sound, Himeji-san probably chose something that's more like a liquid or jelly.

“...Uu!”

I could feel Muttsurini freeze for a moment. It's too late to regret it now! Go to hell for doing something so reckless without thinking it through!

“Okay. Now, let's turn the fire on and let it simmer.”

Yuuji turned the switched of the gas stove.

There's only a small light in the room, and the silent time came again.

Like what I expected, Hideyoshi cared about defending himself. Muttsurini failed. Thus, Yuuji's the only enemy left.

I watch the flame of the claypot and repeated my battle strategy inside my head.

~Akihisa's side~

Yuuji probably thought this way as he chose the tofu. Once the ingredient Himeji-san throws in dissolves into the soup, it will threaten our lives. In that case, he just needs to block the soup off and let someone be the victim. To complete this mission, he needs to use the tofu and block my and Himeji-san's ingredient off his food, forming a sealed reservoir. His plan must be to push the poison over to me. The reason why he insisted on not putting too much soup inside the claypot is because he's afraid that the cooked tofu will float and form gaps.

In that case, I'll just use Yuuji's strategy against him!

Yuuji will use the tofu to seal Himeji-san and me off. Using that, once I put this ingredient X outside this area, I can be assured of my safety. Also, I'll use konjac[9] and tofu (what Yuuji put) in front of him to form another reservoir. This is another measure for Yuuji.

Of course, if I do this, the soup that flows into Yuuji's area will just be normal soup, and it will be meaningless. It'll be over once the dangerous ingredient flows over to my side.

At this point, I have to make use of the rules of the dark hotpot. Though

everyone can choose only one ingredient, there's another ingredient inside the claypot—the kelp that's used to boil the soup.

To let the dangerous ingredient fall into Yuuji's area, I will take the kelp that's heated and curled up and put it in front of Himeji-san's area. With that, the ingredient X (jelly-shaped) will all flow into Yuuji's area, and can prevent everyone else from getting hurt! Yuuji you idiot! Enjoy being trapped in the defense you created!

In this fight for survival, the last one who'll survive is—

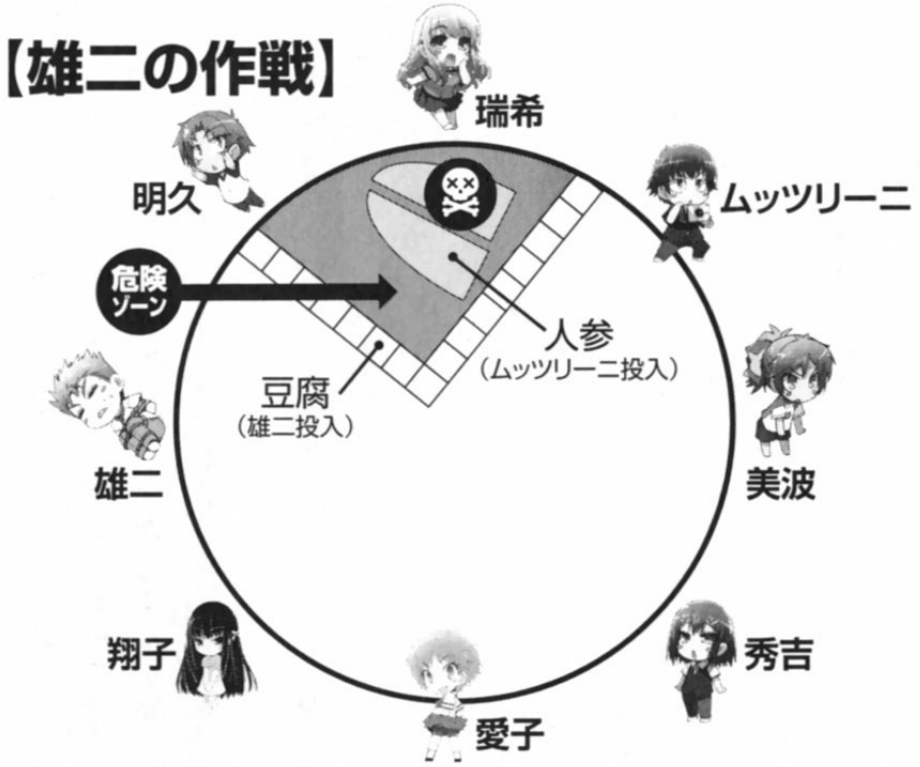
~Yuuji's side~

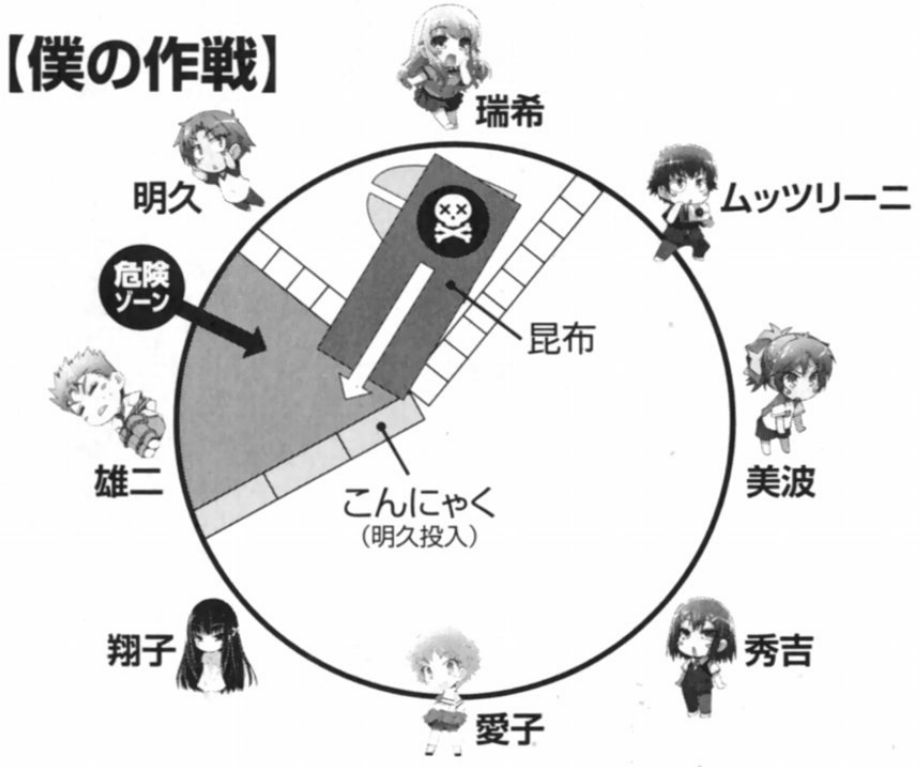
Fooled ya, idiot! Damned Akihisa, so he actually created a sealed off area with the konjac like what I expected. He didn't even think why I chose the konjac without choosing the tofu that will crumble easily, and why I remained silent even though the kelp's all cooked? It's because Akihisa didn't think about this at all that I called him an idiot!

Akihisa's in charge of the kitchen, so he will know what I choose no matter what. Since he knows, that guy will do something to me, and because of that, I must checkmate him back.

First, I left the konjac behind, chose tofu, and poked a few holes in it. These tofu blocks are to separate Akihisa and me. Akihisa must be thinking that the tofu's out of the safe zone and lower his guard. He will naturally reach his chopsticks out and pick the stuff in front of him without know that the tofu wall has a few holes, and I just need to pick food from outside Akihisa and my area.

In this battle of survival, the last one standing will be—


【雄二の作戦】
瑞希
明久
ムッツリーニ
危険ゾーン
人参
（ムッツリーニ投入）
豆腐
（雄二投入）
雄二
美波
翔子
秀吉
愛子


【僕の作戦】
瑞希
明久
ムッツリーニ
危険ゾーン
昆布
雄二
美波
こんにゃく
（明久投入）
翔子
秀吉
愛子

“—ME!”

“—ME!”

As we waited for the hotpot to boil, time gradually passed.

“It's about time. Turn off the fire.”

After a while, as Yuuji said this, the flame of the gas stove shut off, and the living room descended into darkness again.

“It's finally time...”

“...I'm so nervous.”

“I don't know what kind of taste will it be~”

Though nervous, the girls voices were still full of expectations.

“Then let's open it.”

Minami reached out to grab the cover of the pot and opened it. At that moment, the spicy flavor of Tabasco scattered through the air and reached our noses.

“““Ugh...”””

The girls frowned as they seemed to smell it. This should be their just desserts.

“Then, the dark hotpot game begins officially now!”

“OKAY! LET'S EAT!”

To motivate ourselves,we deliberately increased our volume. I poked my chopsticks inside to grab the food. Now's the important part. I have to be careful not to poke the tofu and konjac that's used as the protective wall.

“Humph, Akihisa, we're facing a dark hotpot, but you're looking rather relaxed.”

“Speaking of which, aren't you the same, Yuuji? It doesn't seem like you know what tragic fate will befall you?”

I continued to search for the food inside the hotpot as I jostled with Yuuji. Fufufu, you big idiot. Did you think that you could use the tofu wall to protect your measly life? In front of this konjac wall I created, you can only feel endless bounds of despair!

Thinking through the painful look Yuuji will soon show, the tip of my chopsticks seem to touch something. This should be a safe zone, so let's take this.

“Akihisa, are you really going to eat that?”

“You too, Yuuji. Don't regret once you pick it up.”

As we decided on our food, Yuuji and I jabbed at each other again. I have to hold my chopsticks tight to prevent the food from dropping back into the pot.

Watching myself so as not to let the food fall, I intend to pick it into my mouth at one go. Ready—

Dloop ← Corroded konjac.

“““...””

….....What?

My thinking process was short-circuited.

No no no, that's impossible. Something must have gone wrong. Maybe it's because the living room was too dark that I couldn't see clearly. Besides, no matter what, such a thing is impossible!

I decided to pretend that nothing happened and put the piece of konjac back into the claypot.

Fuu...I took a deep breath and again grabbed the thing into my bowl with my chopsticks.

Dloop ← Corroded konjac.

“‘“THE IMPORTANT WALL OF DEFENSE WAS ACTUALLY...!”’”

“Wha, what's going on? Aki, Sakamoto? Why are you shouting!?”

In the midst of the darkness, the scream Minami made scared Yuuji and me.

Why did the konjac melt? What kind of chemical reaction is that? It's just a hotpot. Why is there a chemical reaction!?

“That Himeji's really scary! So our little tricks couldn't win her...”

The defense wall was actually destroyed. Her thinking can't be put on the same level as our childish tricks of trying to survive! She wasn't someone we could deal with right from the beginning!

“Aki, what happened?”

“No...Minami, don't think too much about it...we're already the side who's going to be taken away...”

“I'm serious! What happened?”

There's no need for Minami to know this. At this point, it's too late to understand.

“F, fine, if you don't want to say it, then I'll...

Just when Minami was about to reach her chopsticks at the claypot—

“Shimada, hold on for a moment.”

Yuuji spoke to stop Minami, and then clasped his fingers together and said with an extremely stern voice,

“Our Father in Heaven...”

“What kind of joke are you pulling, Sakamoto!”

“Minami! You have to pray earnestly too! I don't want to see my friend die at all!”

Hideyoshi and Muttsurini seemed to have clasped their hands together as they prayed silently. We're all feeling the same way.

“--Amen.”

“““--Amen.”””

Everyone drew a cross in front of their chest. It's now the time of judgement.

Gradually getting used to the darkness in front of me, I took up my bowl and chopsticks and looked through the darkness.

A strong pungent smell could be smelled through the hot air that's floating. What's going on? My eyes seem to hurt the moment they touch the hot air that's coming out from the pot. I can't even stop my tears.

“A, Akihisa! Why do I feel that the hot air that came out from the hotpot seem to be purple!?”

“UWOOOAAHHH!! MY EYES! MY EEEYYYYEESSS!!”

“Calm down, Akihisa! You'll create a huge tragedy if you accidentally flip the claypot!”

Yuuji exclaimed as he grabbed my wrist.

It's true that if I flip the claypot accidentally, the terror inside it may spill on the human body or even cause some irreversible and terrifying consequence. Yuuji's right. The thing that shouldn't exist is this hotpot.

“Really, what are you playing around with, Aki?”

“...You're too noisy.”

“Why are you often so cheery, Yoshii-kun and the rest~”

The girls at our table didn't seem to notice the abnormal situation that's happening at the table. No, that shouldn't be the case...

“If you find that it's tough to pick them up with chopsticks, why don't we use a scoop?”

Perhaps knowing that there's tofu and konjac amongst the food, Himeji-san suggested using a scoop, and so, everyone ended up having a scoop to pick the food out from the claypot, and we start to walk up the stairway to heaven one step at a time.

“...I'm tucking in.”

Kirishima-san raised her bowl and took a sip. Now, what sort of reaction will she have?

“...It doesn't taste as weird as how it smells.”

“SHOUKO! YOUR VOICE'S ENTERING MY BRAIN DIRECTLY! IS YOUR SOUL IN YOUR OWN BODY!?”

I seemed to see something white behind Kirishima-san. That's way too dangerous!

“Stop fooling around, Aki! It's better to eat now, right? I'm tucking in.”

“Me too~”

This time, Minami and Kudou-san put the chemical weapons into their mouths.

““AARRRRGGGGGHHHHHH!!!””

“Eh!? Isn't it strange to scream once you put the food in! Wouldn't people normally think that it's either 'good' or 'bad'?”

Both of them collapsed onto the table, not moving at all. Not good, they lost consciousness!

“Mi, Minami-chan!? Shouko-chan!? Aiko-chan!? Wake up!”

Himeji-san frantically called them.

“Ugh...wha, what the heck. This taste is too...”

“...Doesn't taste like food at all.”

“Even, even I can't de...”

The three girls shook their heads and slowly got off. Great, it seem that they're still alive.

“Ugh...really, this terrifying experience actually happened to me...”

“...This is a near death experience.”

“This is the first time I tried this flavor~”

Minami and the rest took their drinks and washed away the taste of death in their mouths.

Once they calmed down slightly—

“Okay, now it's your turn to eat now, Muttsurini-kun~”

Kudou-san said.

“...Uu (Shakes head violently)!”

Seeing that the topic suddenly switched to him, Muttsurini immediately panicked. It's obvious that he would be so terrified after seeing three friends lose consciousness at the same time.

“Ahaha, you don't have to be so scared, Muttsurini-kun. This is nothing.”

“...It's not nothing!”

“If there's really a need too, I'll help you do CPR☆!”

“...Uu!”

“So hurry up and eat up. Ah~”

“...Uu (Shakes head violently)!”

Kudou-san was about to send the bowl of soup to Muttsurini's mouth, and beside me--

“...Yuuji, ah~”

“STOP JOKING AROUND! I'M NOT EATING THERE! AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO CPR ON ME EVEN IF I'M UNCONSCIOUS!”

“...There's no need to be ashamed, we kissed before.”

“WHA, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!? THAT WAS ON THE FOREHEAD, IT DOESN'T COUNT! AND THAT'S BECAUSE YOU MADE ME DO THAT AS PROOF OF APOLOGY!”

“...Don't say anymore, ah~”

Sitting beside me, Yuuji was trying his best to resist Kirishima-san. Anyway, as for the kissing incident I just heard, I'll ask more about it during our FFF court.

“Hey, Aki...”

Because I need to focus on the messenger of death that's slowly approaching me.

“Ah~”

Minami brought the bowl to my mouth. Damn it...she wants me to fall unconscious because she tasted that terrifying feeling of hell!

“Do, don't say that, Minami! I don't want to die yet!”

“What are you saying! Hoping that you won't be involved in this? I won't allow that to happen!”

“Even if you say that, I...”

“Stop yapping and open your mouth!”

I tried to wrestle with Minami. Seeing her like this...did she think that the ones who put that disgusting ingredient into the hotpot was us guys? That's a grave mistake! We're the one protecting everyone!

“Okay. Here, ahh~”

The terrifying and dangerous food is slowly approaching my mouth. It'll be bad if this keeps up!

“No, wait, if I fall unconscious, will you do CPR on me, Minami?”

I wasn’t careful and let such ridiculous words slip out of my mouth. I’m doomed! Everyone was spouting gibberish, and even I…

I got into a position as I got ready for Minami’s attack (or rather, humiliation), but what I got was an unexpected response.

“Eh? We, well, that, how, how should I put it.”

That’s strange? Minami looks rather panicky. Ah, I know! There was a little misunderstanding between Minami and me before.

Thinking that this is way too awkward, I just couldn’t say anything as I just remained there silently and blankly.

At this moment, Minami said shyly,

“...We, well…if…if Aki wishes for it…”

Hm? If I wish for it?

“—E, even if you’re not knocked unconscious, I can…”

“Ehhh!? Minami, what are you saying?”

Wait a second! Let me calm down first. If I feel all elated here, maybe I will lose all important clues. CPR…that’s right. Minami never said she would do it mouth-to-mouth. Maybe she will flip my body when I’m unconscious and stamp hard on my back…

“M, Minami-chan’s too sneaky! You’re cheating!”

“Here, Aki, open wide. Ahh!”

“UGH!”

Just when I was thinking, Minami quickly dumped the hotpot soup into my mouth at lightning speed. Damn it, she got me!

“Here, Muttsurini-kun, have some.”

“…U…gu…!”

“…Yuuji, open wide.”

“UGH!”

My friends who were not far away seem like they were forced to open their mouths, and they had something stuffed into their mouths.

She got me…my, my consciousness…

“Well…Minami-chan, let’s play janken. The winner will do CPR on Akihisa-kun…”

“Tha, that can’t do. Aki only asked me. You heard that.”

“Too sneaky…Minami-chan, didn’t you kiss Akihisa-kun before…”

Not good…my consciousness…

“…Yuuji, it’s now my turn to save you.”

“Muttsurini-kun. How does the dark hotpot taste?”

My consciousness…

--Didn’t fade.

“That’s strange? I’m completely alright.”

“What the heck. We’re all fine.”

“…I feel fine too.”

“Hm? That’s true. This hotpot’s spicy, but even I feel that this isn’t lethal.”

Yuuji and Muttsurini, who were forced to eat this dark hotpot, and Hideyoshi, who ate some on his own, seemed to be all fine without any abnormalities. What the heck. We were scared for nothing then?

“I see. So we unknowingly developed some resistance?”

“Besides, we had all sorts of terrifying things stuffed into our mouths.”

“…Really a complicated feeling.”

I took a scoop of bright red soup, and there’s a few blocks of tofu and konjac that’s meshed together with the Tabasco, and then eat the radish and spring onion inside. It’s thanks to everyone adding stuff into the hotpot that Himeji-san’s terrifying ingredient was greatly weakened.

This level of cooking can be considered cute. It’s just some numbness to the tongue and limbs.

“Wh, why are you all alright!? The taste of this hotpot’s extremely terrifying!”

“…I can’t understand at all.”

“Yoshii-kun, do you guys have a taste problem?”

Seeing us all peaceful here, Minami and the rest were all shocked and stunned.

“Arre? Where did everyone go to?”

“Are you awake now, ane-san? It’s quite late already, and everyone went home.”

After the dark hotpot meeting, I was washing the dishes in the kitchen when ane-san, who was sleeping in the other room, came over. To be honest, I didn’t expect ane-san to sleep so deeply because she got drunk. As my parents could drink a lot, I thought that ane-san’s tolerance shouldn’t be bad…maybe it’s

because she’s been sick recently?

“Akira-san, you’re awake? Does your head hurts?”

“Thanks, Mizuki-san. The alcohol’s wearing out. I’m alright.”

Himeji-san, who stayed behind with me to wash the dishes, poured a glass of water and passed it to ane-san. After she drank it, ane-san turned to Himeji-san.

“Speaking of which, is it alright for you not to be back home this late, Mizuki-san? Wouldn’t your parents be worried?”

“It’s alright. My house’s nearby, and my parents aren’t back yet, so I don’t have to worry about the time.”

Just when Himeji-san was about to reach out for the empty glass ane-san drank from—

Prrr!! Prrr!!

The handphone ringtone could be heard from her pocket.

“Ah, sorry. Seems like it’s my call. Let me pick it up for a while.”

Himeji-san nodded slightly, and then turned to pick the phone up.

“Hello hello? Okaa-san, how’s the wedding ceremony? Me? I’m okay here—eh? So, so that’s how it is. Are you alright? Un, un…”

Himeji-san seemed to be shocked as she raised her pitch slightly. What happened? From her tone, did someone have an accident or something?

“Really? No, don’t worry, I’ll be fine. Un, un, really…what rare chance. Okaa-san’s as carefree as ever…okay, I understand. So be it then.”

After putting down the phone, Himeji-san turned around. It seemed like the

phone call just now wasn’t some good news…

“Himeji-san, what happened?”

“Ah, it’s nothing. It’s just that my parents can’t get back immediately.”

“Eh? Is that so? What happened to them?”

“I heard that there was a strike at the airport, and the planes couldn’t fly…”

“Flights terminated…Aki-kun, can you please turn the TV on.”

“Un. Got it.”

I did what ane-san told me to do and turned the TV in the living room on, switched the channels, and found a live news feed from a foreign country.

“Nakanishi-san, this means that the airport can’t be used, right?”

“Yes. As the airport personnel are all unhappy, they are protesting for better work conditions. It seems that it can’t operate normally for the time being, but there should be no worries about a riot.”

The screen’s showing the tourists who were bemused that they couldn’t leave the country and the workers who were raising their banners in protest.

“Is it this country?”

“Yes. My parents went to the wedding of an old friend…”

Himeji-san said that her parents went out for a banquet. So they went overseas.

“But at least it doesn’t look dangerous. That country’s security’s rather good.”

Ane-san said this as she watched the news. Really? It’s great that the security’s good. This may be the best thing out of this.

“Yes. Okaa-san even said ‘it’s a rare chance, so before the airport starts operations, I’ll stay and sightsee with otou-san.’”

“Ahaha, Himeji-san’s mom’s really so optimistic.”

“Okaa-san’s such a carefree person…”

In that case, they can only wait until the strike stops. It’s good that Himeji-san’s parents are fine.

In that case, the problem now is—

“Mizuki-san, what do you intend to do?”

“Well, I can’t do anything in Japan…so I can only wait for them to come back. But all flights were terminated. I have no idea when they’ll come back.”

“Ahh, that’s not it, Himeji-san. Ane-san’s not asking that.”

“???”

“Mizuki-san, you’re stay alone before your parents come back?”

“Ah, yes. I’ll be alone at home during this time.”

Himeji-san has to live alone. That’s a little, no, very worrying…it’s too unsafe for a girl at this age to be alone, especially since security’s been bad recently…

Just when I was thinking about what to do,

“How about you move over to our house first before your parents come back?”

Ane-san suddenly asked. EH? EEEEHHHHHH!!!???

(Ho, hold on a minute, ane-san! Can this really do?)

I frantically grabbed ane-san’s shoulders and whispered to her. Of course, I wanted to let Himeji-san move over to live with us for the time being after knowing of her situation—but I never expected ane-san to say this. Didn’t she often say that she would object to any impure relationship or something? And now that she invited Himeji-san. Is this really okay?

(What’s not alright? This is for Mizuki-san’s good.)

Ane-san answered me without a single doubt, and then adds on,

(Or does Aki-kun prefer the ane-san who'll sit by and watch even after seeing this situation?)

Ane-san gave a mischievous smirk as she said this.

(That's not true! I like ane-san like this the most!)

(Ane-san's happy that you'll say that.)

If not for Himeji-san in front of us, I could have given ane-san a big hug. My ane-san may lack common sense, but she's really a kind and understanding person!

Just when I'm really touched by ane-san's actions, Himeji-san timidly said to us,

"Well…I understand your kind intentions, but this will trouble you. I can't…"

"No, we don't feel troubled at all because Mizuki-san's a good girl."

"Yeah. And if Himeji-san shifts over to live with us, your parents will be more relaxed."

"Even if you say that…"

Himeji-san should be worried about having to live alone, but she wouldn't nod her head to agree to our proposal.

"And I still have most of the seafood ingredients I drew. If you don't hate it, how about you finish them off with us, Himeji-san?"

"Ho, how can I possibly hate it?"

"You don't? Okay, then it's decided."

After getting Himeji-san affirmation, things were decided like that.

This may be a misleading question, but I'll close one eye at that. It would be another matter altogether if she really doesn't want to live with us, but Himeji-san didn't look like she was really against it.

“Ah, tha, that, I…”

Himeji-san seemed like she didn’t know what to do as she hesitated for a long time before saying in a concerned manner,

“In that case…I’m sorry, but I’ll be disturbing you for a few days…”

After saying that, Himeji-san bowed to us. How polite!

“We need to learn from you here, Himeji-san. If there’s anything troubling you, you can tell us anything.”

“Mizuki-san, you may be worried about moving in with a boy of the same age, but I’ll bear responsibility for that and watch Aki-kun’s actions, so you can relax.”

“Ah, no, there’s no need. If it’s Akihisa-kun, I’ll…”

“To be specific, if there’s any incident, I’ll break one of Aki-kun’s fingers.”

“Wa, wait a second, ane-san!”

“And once there’s no more fingers to break, I’ll snap his back.”

“DON’T SAY SUCH THINGS, ANE-SAN! THAT’S BASICALLY DECLARING MY DEATH!”

And thus, after the sports meeting ended, I will be living together with Himeji-san.

Himeji-san entering my daily life; how would that turn out…

“Th, this girl’s impolite and incapable. Please take care of me!”

Anyway, at least I know that Himeji-san’s someone who gets flustered easily.

From now on, allow me, Kubo Toshi—no, ‘brainy specs’ answer

everyone’s problems.

FROM NOW ON, ALLOW ME, KUBO TOSHI... NO, 'BRAINY SPECS' TO ANSWER EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS.

3rd year, student T-mura Y-saku's problems.

Brainy specs-sensei, please listen to my problems.

I have someone I like. During the test of courage tournament, I summoned my courage and recited my love poem to him loudly, but he screamed and didn’t respond to me directly. Am I rejected?

It’s about time for the National exams, and I should change my mood and prepare for the exams. Please give me a suggestion.

Brainy specs-sensei's suggestion.

First, you have to change your thinking. If you start to have negative thoughts at the start, nothing good will happen no matter what you do. You shouldn’t be afraid to step forward. It’s important to face things with a positive attitude. More so as an exam entrant, right?

As for your confession, I’ll say something I personally feel. The other party just

screamed, and I don’t think he rejected you. He could be shy about it. This still has lots of room to develop. The most important thing about love is to view your feelings honestly, and you can’t give up until the very end. So I hope you don’t feel dejected before of such a trivial thing and work hard to chase after him.

2nd year, student S-mizu M-haru's problems.

Hello, brainy specs-sensei. This is the first time I’m writing to you. I’ve always loved onee-sama ever since our first year, but onee-sama just wouldn’t look straight at me. I’ve tried my best to attack, but she would be mindful of other people’s looks and get away from me. What should I do to let onee-sama look straight at me? Please teach me.

Brainy specs-sensei's suggestion.

Before I suggest this, I must applaud for that straightforward and fearless attitude. I find that it’s great that you would love a person single-heartedly.

As for how to let the other party notice your feelings, I guess you just have to do what you've been doing. Anyway, you have to express your love to the other party enthusiastically, which I find is the most important thing. I hope your romance will blossom.

N-bayashi H-romi's Troubles

Brainy specs-sensei, please listen to me. I like that guy who's second in our year and has such a knowledgeable presence, but he seemed to like a certain big idiot. What should I do?

Brainy specs-sensei's suggestion.

Give up.

Me and Japan and the Language I'm Unfamiliar With

ウチと日本と知らない言葉

“Do you want to follow us back to Japan, Minami?”

At dinner, daddy suddenly asked me that.

“Minami-chan would have to be alone if she stays in Germany...”

Mommy put her hand on her cheek with a troubled look on her face.

Because of work, my parents would not be staying in Germany next February, where they spent 14 years of their lives.

“Eh? Onee-chan's not coming with us to Japan?”

My imouto Hazuki looked up at me worriedly. This kid's really curious and energetic, but she really sticks to her sister...if I don't go back with her to Japan, I think she might not know what to do.

“How about it, Minami? If you want to stay here no matter what, daddy will think of a way for you...”

Though he said that, daddy must be wishing that I would return to Japan with them. Besides, it's to be expected that they would be so worried about leaving their daughter who is in her teens alone in another country.

To me...that's really troublesome. Suddenly saying that we're going back to Japan; and I really couldn't imagine life there. That's because I've always stayed in Germany, I studied in the school here, and of course, the friends I had were from here. Daddy and mommy never mentioned anything about returning back to Japan, and we were communicating in German. It's because of that that I couldn't say even a single sentence in Japanese. To me, Japanese are foreigners, and if possible, I really want to stay here together with my good friends. Even if I stay in Germany, I can still meet my family when it's vacation time. But if I go back to Japan, the chances of me making friends there...I guess, should be quite little. If that's the case, then I...

“Onee-chan...aren't you going back with us?”

Just when I was thinking about this, Hazuki looked like she was about to cry as she looked up at me.

Really, this kid can't do anything without her sister...daddy and mommy aren't at home most of the time because of work, and so as the older sister, I had to bear the responsibility of taking care of her. It can't be helped that she would stick onto me.

Thinking about this, I made a decision. Even after returning to Japan, daddy and mommy would be busy with work. If I'm not around to be with her, Hazuki will be really lonely. It must be really cruel to leave a kid alone at such a young age.

For daddy, mommy and my cute little sister's smile, I decided to state my thoughts clearly,

“No, I'll go too. I'll stay in Japan together with daddy, mommy and Hazuki.”

On hearing me say this, my family heaved a sigh of relief, and their originally stiff faces finally let out smiles.

I was already very bored, and I went through the extremely boring school opening address that I didn't even understand due to the language. My classmates and I will now spend a year in this classroom, and the students started introducing themselves.

“My name's Ryo. I hope that we can get along well.”

After the boy in front of me introduced himself, he went back to his seat. It's my turn next.

I felt somewhat nervous as I walked forward. It's important to give a good first impression if I'm to mix into the Japanese environment. I must make sure that I don't do anything strange.

I remembered the self-introduction I worked so hard to practice on, and used the

chalk to write my name on the blackboard. Then, I turned around to say loudly to everyone.

“My name is, Shimada, Minami. Nice to meet you.”[10]

After saying that, everyone widened their eyes in shock. Eh? What's going on? Did I say something wrong so soon?

I felt a slight chill run down my back. Why is everyone looking at me like that?

“Shimada-san is a Japanese from Germany, and she just returned, so everyone, please help her out.”

After the homeroom teacher said that in Japanese, everyone seemed to understand as they nodded their heads. Sensei said that so quickly that I was unable to catch it…but it seemed that he just explained my plight to the other students. Ah, I know, I look like a Japanese, but my stuttering made everyone so shocked.

After realizing the reason, I relaxed somewhat—just when I was thinking that, a few classmates of mine were trying to hold back their giggles. Wha, what? What’s going on?

“It’s alright, Shimada-san, just remember how to write the kanji of your name.”

Even sensei smiled at me after seeing the blackboard. But I did only write my name on the blackboard…

After looking around, I found that everyone was looking at the name I wrote on the board. Eh? Is there something wrong with that?

I looked at the notebook in my pocket to check. Did I write my name wrongly?

—‘Shimada Minami’.[11]

I did write that on my notebook, and yet the kanji I wrote was Shimayumi Mikare[12].

Ah! Looks like I got something wrong!

“…Uu!!”

I hurriedly wiped away the words on the board and wrote it out in romaji ‘Minami Shimada’. What in the world!? If I wrote it wrongly, just tell me that I wrote it wrongly! Only caring about laughing, aren't these guys too heinous already!?

“I hope we can get along!”

As it was too embarrassing, that was all for my self-introduction as I hurriedly returned back to my seat. Uuu...I accidentally made such an embarrassing mistake…

“I’m Sakamoto Yuuji from Kannazuki Middle School.”

The next guy after me introduced himself, and then walked back to his seat. Crude...no, this guy’s more like a violent person, and cold. Seeing him like that, the surrounding classmates started whispering things to each other.

“That guy’s Kannazuki’s…”

“The infamous devil…”

“That guy seems really amazing…”

“…Fu”

Seeing such a noisy conversation, that guy just snorted with disdain. I guess...he’s called Sakamoto, right? He looks really unapproachable, but those kind of guys should be normal in Japan, right? Daddy said before that 'Japan’s a country with good security, so you don’t have to worry'. So that person just looks fierce, but he should be a typical Japanese guy, right? Hm, no problem. No need to worry.

As I tried to convince myself, the next student went up, and it seemed like a girl this time.

“My name’s Kinoshita Hideyoshi. I hope we can get along.”

I didn’t understand that guy’s Japanese at all, but it should be normal, I guess? But she was a girl, yet she was wearing guys' clothing. It’s weird, but I don’t really mind. That must be because she’s not used to wearing skirts or something that she’s wearing guys’ clothing.

It’s alright, it’s alright. I should be able to get used to this place called Japan. Daddy said that ‘Japan’s not scary at all, and no weird thing is going to happen’. I must believe in daddy.

I immediately shook off the anxiety that floated in my head and focused on the next classmate who was going to do the self-introduction. Should be a guy now.

He seemed to be mumbling to himself as he said slowly and softly that I could understand.

“…Tsuchiya Kouta. Interests are perv…no, specialty is stealing pho…nothing much.”

The classmate who said this revealed a digital camera vaguely from his point.

This, this should be normal...right? His interest should be voice recording instead of photo taking…to record the things the teachers would teach in class. That’s right, it must be like that! Just a small thing. It can’t prove that Japan’s full of weirdos…right? Daddy, I think I can believe you now!

I bucked myself up to get ready for the next student’s self-introduction. It should be another guy.

“I’m Yoshii Akihisa from Nagatsuki Middle School. I hope we can get along.”

The boy who bowed to everyone at the front—seemed different for some reason. He was the only one with a sailor uniform top.

“…”

I got tricked…I got tricked by daddy!!!

My life after this was dyed an unhappy grey. Since when is Japan not scary and

weird!? Our class' full of scary, strange and dangerous people!

Because of those three guys who had such an impact on me, I didn't manage to listen to the other classmates introducing themselves. Unknowingly, everyone finished their self-introduction.

Our homeroom teacher gave a little briefing before leaving the classroom. It seems that today's only the opening ceremony and homeroom session, so we could go home after that. Should I go home immediately after this? Daddy and the rest did show up for the opening ceremony. They should be home now?

Just when I thought that and wanted to stand up, I found a lot of people gathering around me. Eh? Wha, what is it?

"Shimada-san's a Japanese resident, right? When did you come back to Japan?"

"Were you born in Japan or outside Japan?"

"Is your English good?"

The questions came over one after another, and I didn't know how to answer for a while. Wha…what is Japanese resident? I was born in Japan, but I'm not too good in English or Japanese—erm, how to answer them back in Japanese?

"Where do you stay at now?"

"Do you have any clubs you want to join?"

"Did you get a boyfriend in Japan?"

Just when I was thinking, there were a lot more questions. I'm thinking of how to answer, can you please wait for me!?

"What are your interests?"

"What food do you like?"

"What's your bust size?"

Ahh!! That's irritating!! Can't you people just calm down first!? I can't answer them all! How do I say 'please be quiet' in Japanese?

I really wanted to shout out. At that moment, I suddenly remembered what I heard a girl say that morning. A guy was trying to woo her, but she looked irritated and just said something to quiet that guy down. Then, I should follow what she said.

I remember what that girl said was—

“Sh…”

“““Sh?”””

“Shut up, you swines.”

I tried to smile as I said that, trying not to leave a bad impression.

I remembered that girl who said that had a hairstyle of curls.

Did I express my intention clearly? I timidly looked at everyone’s expression, and found that the surrounding students were all staring at my face silently.

“I, I see. I’m really sorry.”

“This is the first time that I was called ‘swine’ ever since I was born…”

“Should be normal to say that in foreign countries…”

My classmates looked awkward and left me.

Eh? Tha, that’s weird? You don’t have to go. I just hoped that you could wait for me to answer properly. Did I choose the wrong words?

I wanted to tell them that I had no intention of chasing them away, but I couldn't express my feelings properly through Japanese.

“Warten Sie bitte Horen Sie meine Geschincite bitte."[13]

I anxiously shouted out the German I was familiar with, but everyone just looked troubled as they smiled at me awkwardly and left me silently.

Uu…doesn’t anyone understand German here?

“We, well…do not misunderstand, please.”

I couldn’t speak Japanese, but at least I can use English to communicate with them, right? English’s not my strong point, but at least it’s better than Japanese.

“Ah…I can’t speak English.”

But everyone just responded like that and didn’t stop in their tracks. As I recovered, I found myself standing blankly over there.

“…”

I fought and lost on the first day of school.

Everyone in class kept their distance from me and started to look for others to talk with. They either got together to know each other or intended to go out with their friends (most likely, they graduated from the same middle school).

…I’m so jealous…

I really wanted to make friends soon, and I wanted to play with everyone.

“Haa…”

I sighed deeply and packed my stuff as I prepared to leave the classroom.

At that moment—

“Ah, well…you’re Shimada-san, right?”

A boy’s voice came from behind. That’s great! I don’t know why I failed, but at least someone was willing to talk to me!

“Yes?”

I turned my head around expectantly, but—

“…Haa…”

“Eh? What’s wrong? Why did you look so disappointed when you saw my face?”

Standing in front of me was the mysterious boy in sailor uniform. It, it really feels like my expectations were dampened…

Ah, no. I shouldn’t judge people by their appearances. Maybe I'd find him to be a nice guy after talking to him. Maybe there’s a reason why he’s dressed like that?

“?”

After being stared at by me, that boy tilted his head in a puzzled manner. Ah, like a little animal. He looks cute…I remember he’s called Yoshii, right?

“Well…”

“Hm? What’s wrong?”

After I said that, he said that really slowly, perhaps because he considered that I was still not used to speaking Japanese, and then answered in a way I could understand. What, so he’s a nice guy.

“Why, are, your, clothes…”

Anyway, I asked the biggest question in my mind.

“Eh? Ahh, you’re talking about this? Well, the reason, that’s…”

The boy in front of me seemed to have trouble opening his mouth.

“Because I overslept and panicked, so I…”

Would Japanese students wear sailor uniforms when they panic? I really don’t understand. This really needs a whole lot of understanding.

“Oi, idiot! Don’t block me and talk about such a stupid thing.”

Just when I was trying to understand the meaning behind that boy’s words, another voice could be heard.

“Don’t be like this, Sakamoto-kun. Shimada-san’s still not used to Japan. How can you call her stupid?”

“I’m talking about you, Yoshii.”

Responding with an unhappy look was Sakamoto, that guy who looked violent.

At that moment, Yoshii, who was scolded and called an idiot, glared at him unhappily.

“Muu…what about me do you find idiotic?”

“Every single action you do.”

“What are you saying! Don’t decide someone’s character based on appearance!”

“I think there’s no need for more when I see you like that.”

Yoshii and Sakamoto seemed to be arguing about something.

As they said that too quickly, I couldn’t understand their conversation at all.

“Calling me stupid!? You’re the stupid one here! Having such a pretty girl talking to you and you practically ignored her…”

“That, that person has nothing to do with you, you idiotic moron!”

“What are you saying!? You’re the damned stupid guy!”

Both of them started to quarrel with even more intensity. Eh…what should I do in this situation?

“I FOUND YOU ANNOYING EVER SINCE I FIRST MET YOU THIS MORNING! ESPECIALLY THAT IDIOT NAIVE FACE OF YOURS! CAN’T YOU BE MORE MANLY!?”

“THAT’S SOMETHING I WANT TO SAY! CALLING SOMEONE STUPID THE FIRST TIME YOU MEET, DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE WORD, COURTESY!?”

“I DON’T WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM SOMEONE WHO WORE A SAILOR UNIFORM TO THE OPENING CEREMONY!”

Those two guys continued to argue even more intensely, ignoring me while I was

all confused. As they were talking too fast, I didn't even understand a single word they said. However, I understood something clearly—if I get involved with these guys, it's likely that I won't be able to live an ordinary school life.

"Well, then, bye."

I glanced at the boys who didn't even look and me, grabbed by bag hurriedly and left.

Can I really get used to this school…?

On thinking about the situations I may meet in the future, I couldn't help but sigh. I know that there's a lot of difference in culture between Japan and Germany, but what I'm about to face seems to be worse than culture differences…

At least I should get back home before I get even more tired. As I walked towards the corridor, I found a familiar girl in the corridor. The classmate who was wearing the male uniform, even though she's a girl—that girl called Kinoshita.

Kinoshita didn't notice me behind her. What to do? She's a girl from my class. I should say hello to her first.

I looked at her back. Unlike those two stupid guys, Kinoshita looked like an ordinary good student, but she was not wearing a girl's skirt. I know some girls don't like to wear skirts, so this shouldn't be anything weird. I guess it's fate for us to meet coincidentally. I think I should greet her before I leave.

I decided to do so and repeated the greeting in Japanese in my mind, I remember that if I want to say goodbye, I should say 'sayonara'. I just need to tell her, 'Kinoshita-san, sayonara'.

After taking a deep breath, I increased my pace and intended to call her front behind, but Kinoshita changed path all of a sudden. That’s weird. Where’s she going…ah, I see. The toilet.

I didn’t have the intention to chase her and say hello to her, but I still walked behind Kinoshita, who was walking to the toilet. My fingers were dirtied with chalk when I wrote my name on the blackboard, so I wanted to go to the toilet to wash my hands.

“…”

Kinoshita pushed the blue door leading to the toilet and walked in. Heh…so the blue door was for female toilets, and the pink door was for males…good thing I was following Kinoshita, or else I would have messed up and entered the male toilet.

I felt the refreshing feeling of the difference in culture and followed her into the toilet.

“““WOOOOOHHHHHHH!!! WHY DID A GIRL JUST ENTER A MALE TOILET!!?”””

A few guys who just used the toilet shrieked out at the same time. HOLD ON A MINNNUUUTTTEEE!!?? WHY ARE THERE GUYS IN THE TOILET!?

“Wa, wait! Please calm down! I’m a man!!”

“““WHATEVER WILL DOOO!!! JUST HURRY UP AND GET OUTT!!!”””

“Verschwinden wir von hier, Kinoshita!"[14]

“THIS IS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING!!”

I grabbed Kinoshita’s wrist just when she was about to say something, and hurriedly rushed out of the toilet.

“Haa, haa haaa…”

We continued to run, and only stopped once we ran down to the platform on the

staircase.

“Muu…why did I have to run too…”

Kinoshita didn’t look too convinced. Didn’t she realize what she was doing?

Th, this person is…

“Bist du dumm!? Geh doch nicht in die Toilette der Jungs!”[15]

“Wha, what? Why must you be angry with me, Shimada?”

Kinoshita looked like she didn’t know why I was angry as she widened her eyes. Even though I just came back from another country, I knew how disastrous it was to mistake the male toilet for the female toilet. Why can’t she tell? Since she’s a girl, she should use the female toilet! It’s because of her that I was treated as a weirdo too!

“Shimada, I know you’re mistaken. Everyone would often be mistaken, but I’m really a guy.”

“Ich habe das für dich getan! Geh ab sofort in die Toilette der Mädchen!"[16]

I gave some advice to Kinoshita in German, even though she sounded like she wanted to argue (However, it’s unlikely that she would understand it anyway), and turned away to leave. Ahhh…really! I’m so unlucky today!

On a side note, today seemed to be a ‘Storm of Spring’ or something, as a lot of girls in the school corridors were holding their skirts down—near them, there was a small and skinny guy lying in his own pool of blood. Really, what’s with this country called Japan…

While having lunch with daddy and mommy, who specially took leave to attend my school’s opening ceremony and Hazuki, who hadn't started school yet, daddy looked worried as he asked me,

“Minami, how’s school in Japan? Are you getting used to them?”

“…”

If I got used to them, I’ll be treated like an idiot or a pervert.

“? Onee-chan. Did you meet something you didn’t like?”

Hazuki stared at my face worriedly. Oh dear, I have to be more careful and not make her worry for me.

“Nothing. Nothing bad happened. It’s just that the school had a lot of unique and weird people!”

Or rather, they were all weird.

“Really? It’s great that you can be happy.”

“It’ll be great if onee-chan can get friends.”

“Ye, yeah.”

To be honest, I’m thinking that it would be appropriate not to associate myself with those people, rather than become friends…

“Minami, everyone knows that you’re a Japanese who came back from Germany. Were there any problems?”

Mommy peeled the apples that were to be used as dessert as she asked me.

“Un. My classmates asked me too many questions, so I even grumbled at them.”

“Grumbled? In Japanese?”

“Un.”

“Heh! Onee-chan’s amazing. You can speak Japanese so quickly?”

“Of course. I used proper Japanese to tell them ‘shut up, you swines’.”

The moment I said that, daddy and mommy immediately lost their voice. Mu? What’s going on?

“Mi, Minami…”

“Hm? Daddy, what’s wrong?”

Daddy’s face seemed to stiffen. What happened?

“In German, what you said would be ‘Werden Sie schweigsam, ein Sehwein.’…”

Daddy told me the truth with a terrified expression.

Eh? ‘Werden Sie Schweigsam, ein Schwein’ (Shut up, you swines)? Isn’t that… too rude? Something crude that’s used to scold others?

“‘‘…’’”

Daddy and mommy looked at me worriedly. Wha, what to do? I have to explain myself clearly to those classmates!

“Tha, that’s because, I was joking with the friends I just met…”

I could only try to lie and go through that. That girl wasn’t my friend, but I did only imitate her. I guess it’s a pass, right?

On hearing me say that, daddy and mommy heaved a sigh of relief.

“Really, Minami, learning such weird Japanese just after transferring in.”

“Yeah. It’s okay if it was a joke. Be careful though, or you may say some really weird Japanese.”

“Un, I, I got it.”

Thus, the first day of my worrying school life ended silently like this.

☆

“Exist, survive, live in, living now, the common applications of these sayings are __”[17]

It’s been ten days since the opening ceremony and the school schedule gradually went on track, but I didn’t understand what the teachers were talking about at all, and that still hadn't changed.

The school did consider my scores, but they didn’t change the lessons for everyone, and continued to move at the normal lesson speed without stopping to explain this to Japanese that doesn’t understand anything about the language. I could barely understand maths (other than proving), but I was completely clueless about ancient language or modern language.

“Haa…”

A sigh came out of my mouth, and I could only look outside the window and spend the boring lesson time. I had been melancholic recently.

I don’t understand anything the teachers were talking about, but that’s not too bad, since I expected that. The problem is that I couldn’t get along with the class.

“Haa…”

Perhaps everyone got scared off by me calling them ‘swines’. My classmates who hadn’t been prepared to get ready for lessons right before school begins probably wouldn’t spend too much time thinking about the Japanese who just came back from overseas and said too much. I could count the number of people who interacted with me with the fingers of my hand.

“Then, Yoshii-kun. Can you describe what’s the pronoun of the term ‘live in’?”

“Erm…’hannari’[18] desu.”

“I asked about the pronoun in ancient language, and you answered in a Kyoto-ben[19]. That’s really an answer that didn’t fit the question at all.”

“Eh? That, that’s weird?”

That idiot in class was holding an ancient language dictionary, and he made everyone laugh because of the nonsense he spouted. That Yoshii never answered a single question right no matter how many times he was called up. The rate he answered the questions correctly was worse than my rate of not knowing Japanese. What’s going on with his mind? Does he even know how to use a dictionary?

I just feel that he’s really stupid, but the classmates around us who were laughing away don’t seem to think so. They were shocked by Yoshii’s stupidity, but if there’s a need to put it, it’s more like they were ‘smiling’ back at his stupidity. I seemed to be able to hear my classmates say helplessly ‘that Yoshii, really’.

It’s been a few days since school started, and that idiot was able to mix into this class. With regards to this, I just feel unhappy for some reason.

“Unfortunately, ‘hannari desu’ is the wrong answer. The correct answer is—”

Sensei gave a wry smile and said the correct answer. He did explain the answer again a second time, but I still couldn’t understand. Maths wasn’t so bad, but with subjects like ancient language, modern language and Japanese history involved, it’s a whole long set of foreign alphanumerical series that I couldn’t understand. I could barely understand the terms needed for basic living, but specialized terms or old language or whatsoever are really completely out of my understanding.

“Ha…”

In the end, I could only look outside the window and sigh silently as I wait for every single second to pass. For some reason, I just couldn’t focus on studying Japanese…I might as well skip that special Japanese lecture on Saturday. Since there’s only one of this lesson per week, it can’t possibly be beneficial to my

Japanese.

I continued to wait for the end of the lesson blankly. The ancient language lesson that's really boring felt like the minute hand on the clock as the progress rate felt really slow for some reason.

"—Okay. That's it for lessons today."

Sensei left the classroom, and the painful time finally ended. I should get back home soon…

"Ah, Shimada-san. Where are you going?"

Just when I took my bag and got ready to leave the classroom, someone called my name from beside me. If it's such a lazy way of calling me, it must be that guy, the idiot who I just don't like.

"What's wrong?"

I subconsciously increased my intonation.

"Well…"

I specially answered back, but the idiot who called out first—Yoshii looked troubled as he scratched his face with his finger. What's wrong? What's with you calling me when you had nothing for me?

"I[20] am, going, back."

I held back my frustrated emotions and expressed my intent. I might as well head back home to prepare dinner instead of talking to such an idiot.

"He? What a sea?"

"Wa, ta, shi!"

On hearing that idiot's response, I forcefully pronounced every single intonation one by one. Who would say 'what a sea' in this situation! Was my pronunciation of 'watashi' so weird? Or is he mocking me?

“Ahh, you’re saying ‘I’m going back’, right?”

At least it seems that he finally understood what I meant, as Yoshii clapped his hands together. Even that action made me really irriated.

“—Want to go back, but not ye…yo—there’s Homeroom after—this—”

Completely failing to notice my feelings, Yoshii then continued to talk. As I was really frustrated at lacked concentration, I could only barely hear the word ‘Homeroom’.

“…”

I slightly pondered the meaning of his words.

Homeroom? Ahh that’s right. Speaking of which, it seems that we have to attend some homeroom lesson or something. I forgot all about it since I wanted to go back home early.

“So, you can’t go back yet, so please wait for a while.”

Yoshii looked at me and smiled radiantly. What? I just forgot about Homeroom and wanted to go back early, was that really weird? Or is it that he felt that my Japanese’s amusing?

For some reason, when I see him smiling like that, I really feel very infuriated…!

“Ahh—yea, while there’s Homeroon—I got something—I want to—talk to you about—”

That idiot seemed to be blabbering about something again. Since he told me not to leave, there shouldn’t be anything else to talk about, right? Does he want to talk to me about something?

It’s true that it was my fault for not paying attention to him, but whatever the case, I still don’t understand what he’s talking about. The gradually venting frustration inside me made me glare angry at Yoshii in front of me.

At this moment, Yoshii smiled even radiantly and said to me,

“Well…uyuu…dore—buniiro—monami?”

……Haaa……? What, what is this guy trying to say…?

“Cyuu—dore—buniiro—monami?”

He smiled and repeated the words he just said. This time, I tried to pay attention, but I still don’t understand what this guy is trying to say.

“?”

Yoshii then had a doubt on his face, and that expression looked like ‘how do you not understand this’. But, why would there be any doubt…to me, this is a foreign land, you’re all talking in a foreign language, and there’s nothing weird about me not understanding you, right!?

“Erm—”

“I DON’T UNDERSTAND!”

I increased my volume and prevented Yoshii from repeating what he wanted to say. This guy must find me interesting and is treating me like an idiot, right? Since he’s been treated like an idiot, he’s treating me as an idiot for being weaker than him in the language, and even treat it as entertainment! It must be like that!

“I’m, going, back!”

I really couldn’t take being belittled by an idiot who can’t even study well. Who cares about homeroom? I just need to tell sensei that I had to leave early!

“““…”””

I know that everyone in class was looking at me, but it doesn’t matter. Even if they deliberately increased their distance from me because of this, I don’t care! I have quite a huge distance from them anyway!

I went back home earlier than usual, spent some time shopping in the shopping street, bought some ingredients for dinner at the same time, and then went home.

☆

“Onee-chan, this crepe’s really nice.”

During dinner, my imouto Hazuki took large bites from the curry-flavored crepes I bought back and said that to me.

“Really? I’m glad that you like it.”

“Un. I like butter crepes, but curry flavor’s good too.”

Butter crepes…on hearing that, my heart sank. I knew that Hazuki liked butter crepes, because I do too. I wanted to buy butter crepes today, but…the ones that were served were curry flavored, and even the sauces were chilli and oyster. The reason was simple. I couldn’t even do a simple thing like buying things.

Seeing my little sister smile so happily and innocently, my heart became even more depressed.

“Thank you for setting up dinner tonight, Minami.”

“It’s nothing, mommy. Don’t mind.”

Mommy looked apologetic as she thanked me.

It’s been a while since we finished our moving, and daddy and mommy seemed to be busy with moving. Mommy came back later, and daddy’s so busy he’s nowhere to be seen. Looks like he has to work overtime today too.

“We’re busy with work recently, so we should be late for the next few days…”

Mommy said this to Hazuki and me. Daddy and mommy are working at the same company, so if daddy goes home late, mommy wouldn’t be coming back home early as well. Hazuki and I didn’t grumble though as we expected it.

“It’s okay, mommy. Onee-chan will take care of Hazuki.”

Hazuki said this sentence that’s full of belief in this elder sister without thinking further, and of course, I won’t leave Hazuki alone like that. Or rather, it’s because I had to take care of her that I came to live in Japan.

“Don’t worry, mommy. I’ll handle the domestic stuff.”

I patted my chest and answered confidently. On hearing that, mommy finally heaved a sigh of relief—actually, on seeing that expression, I’m really guilty about it.

Actually,I…can’t do anything right, whether it’s in school or buying things.

It’s about close to three weeks ever since school started.

My classmates have already made good friends with each other, and every one of them were gathered together, eating bentos during lunch.

“Haa…”

In this classroom with a happy atmosphere, I’m sighing alone.

I still haven’t blended well with this class, and I would make mistakes when buying stuff. I often couldn’t find what I wanted, and even went home a few times just to check up the Japanese before going back to the shop.

“Haa…”

My Japanese didn’t improve at all. As for why, it’s because I used practically no Japanese at all. As I couldn’t speak Japanese, I couldn’t make any friends; as I couldn’t make friends, I didn’t have much chances to use Japanese. This vicious cycle made me really want to hate myself.

“Haa…”

I could only continue to sigh like it would continue forever.

I can’t possibly continue to sigh like this while living in Japan, right…

When I decided to come to this country, I was confident that I could learn Japanese well. Now, I don’t have any motivation at all. The Japanese level that’s needed for everyday life was bad, let alone homework. I left my textbooks and notebooks in school, and didn’t do any studying or revision at all. The textbook was like new, not flawed at all…ahh, no, wait. I can’t say that. I wrote my name a few times, so it can’t be completely new. I was really hoping to do my best on the night before the opening ceremony, and I wrote my name in kanji on the textbooks and notebooks. Unfortunately, I wrote my name wrongly…

I remembered the stupid event that happened when I introduced myself during the opening ceremony. ‘Shimada Minami’ and Shimayumi Mikare’ looked so similar, it can’t be helped that I made a mistake! Really, it’s because I made such an error in the beginning that things got so bad…

I just feel that the reason I’m in this situation was because I wrote my name wrote that time, so I took my textbooks out and looked at my name column. That small block has the ‘Shimayumi Mikare’ that designated my unfortunate life, that wrong name—

“???”

My name label—wait, it’s not wrong?

What’s written on it is ‘Shimada Minami’, the correct way. That’s strange? Why isn’t it the wrong name? Did I remember wrongly?

Well, it’s doesn’t matter. I thought as I put the textbook back into the drawer. I’m the only one who thought that my mistake in writing my name was the start and reason behind my unfortunate life. No matter whether the name on my textbook’s correct, it doesn’t change my current situation.

“Oi, Akihisa, those C class guys from Daybreak Middle School said that they want to play a game of basketball. The wager will be the bread from the

teamwork club. Are you in?”

“A basketball match with bread on the line? I’m joining in! I’m worried about not having money for meals this month, that’s great!”

“Okay, then let’s get our group members.”

I laid down on my textbook around and looked about the classroom, and saw that idiot and that crude and violent guy chatting away at the platform. I thought they weren’t on good terms... Since when did they become such good friends…? Well, it's not like I'm jealous anyway.

“…I’ll help too.”

“I’ll take part as well. It seems interesting.”

And then, the other two mysterious fellows joined into the conversation. Is this what they mean by the gathering of stench? Idiots would naturally gather with idiots. Humph, just like idiots.

I coldly stared at that group of idiots. After noticing my stare, Yoshii walked towards me in steps ‘doku doku’. Wha, what is he trying to do?

“Well…cyuu…dore—buniiro—monami?”

He’s saying some Japanese I don’t understand. What did he mean by ‘cyuu’? Does that mean middle school? Return back to middle school? In the club? ‘Monami’??? Did he just say mean ‘back into the club’? Middle school club—uugh, ARGH! I don’t understand at all! This guy’s Japanese and foreign languages are all weird! Oh well, better ignore him!

“…”

As I was really irritated, I decided to ignore his existence. However, that idiot continued to repeat the same sentence.

“Well…cyuu…dore—buniiro—monami?”

I don’t want to listen to him at all, but that strange pronunciation remained in my ears for some reason. I don’t understand what he’s talking about…and what’s with that ‘Monami’ at the end! Is he calling my name? But my name’s not ‘Monami’, but ‘Minami’! Since you can’t even remember my name correctly, stop calling me like that so directly as if we’re close!

Such an idea appeared in my mind, and the irritation geared in my mind started to be even more uncontrollable.

Why must this guy always make fun of me!? Doesn’t he know that I’m feeling really irritated now?

“??”

The idiot in front of me just smiled blankly, clearly showing that he doesn’t understand anything at all.

“Don’t, talk, to, me, idiot!”

I used Japanese to clearly express my rejection.

The moment I said that, that idiot was stunned for a while, and asked back,

“Heh? Pear…don’t kick it?”

Ahh, that’s really irritating! Why doesn’t he understand at all! Is my Japanese really so weird? Fine! If that’s the case, I’ll say it to him clearly in English!

“What a shit man you are!!”

English’s not a subject we’re familiar with, but with such basic English, he should be able to understand no matter how stupid he is, right?

“Ah? Eh? Erm, that…I, I’m a guy…”

Just when I was thinking about that, Yoshii answered me with some ridiculous Japanese.

I could still understand the ‘I’m a guy’—hold on…I’m a guy? What is this idiot saying? Why would he mention my gender?

“Oi Akihisa, why would you involve the gender now?”

The violent guy beside him—Sakamoto asked Yoshii in a puzzled manner. And then, Yoshii answered back in a shy manner,

“Because Shimada-san just said ‘I man, you are?’ (TN: watashi=I, our idiot would literally understand it like that) Didn’t you hear that?”

What? ‘I man, you are’? That’s right. This idiot probably thought that I was asking him ‘I’m a man, what are you’.

“Maybe she misunderstood me since I was wearing a sailor uniform on the first day.”

What’s that idiot saying? I wasn’t listening though. What…I’m wearing a skirt, has long hair, and he doesn’t feel that it’s strange for me to say ‘I’m a guy’? What an idiot!

“…”

In other words, to this idiot, am I a guy instead of a girl? Did he mean that?

“You’re mistaken, Akihisa. Shimada said it so fast that it did sound like ‘I man, you are?’, but if you separate them out, the correct pronunciation should be ‘what a shit man you are’. In other words, she doesn’t like you.”

“Eh? Is, is that so?”

“And you sure have guts for treating an angry girl as a guy.”

This idiot sure has guts… if he thinks that I won’t be angry no matter what nonsense he spouted out just because he thought that I’m a transfer student from overseas, he’s damned wrong! Even I won’t stand being treated like a guy! Do you think that I’ll be that easily bullied!?

“HALTEN SIE MICH NICHT IN HOHN! ICH NEHME EINEN STREIT!"[21]

I growled at Yoshii. Very good! If you want to fight, bring it on! I’m not afraid of you!

While really itching to grab him by the collar and vent my frustration, Yoshii hurriedly waved his hands and said something.

“It, it’s not like this, Shimada-san! I didn’t treat you as a guy just because your breasts are small!”

“VERDAMMT!!!"[22]

“WAAAAAHHHH!! MY ELBOW’S TWISTING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!”

I don’t know what in the world did he just say, but at least I could clearly make out the key words ‘breasts were small’! How long is this guy going to mess around with me! And my breasts aren’t small! They’re just slow in growth! One year later, my figure will be really good!

“Hahaha, this guy’s really amazing. Saying that her breasts are small in this tense situation, you’re really amazing, Akihisa!”

“…Uu…I, it was just a slip of tongue…”

Sakamoto said that to Yoshii while he’s laying face down on the floor. Humph! It’s great that you have a friend you cares for you so much, idiot!

Seeing their interactions, I felt angry for not good reason. To make Yoshii understand every single word I said, I reached my finger out, pointed at him, and slowly said out every single word.

“What a shit man you are!”

Ahh, that’s so irritating! I don’t want to stay in this classroom for a second longer!

Grabbing my bag in the meantime, I turned to head out of the classroom.

“Oi, Shimada.”

Just when I was in the corridor and ready to head for the exit, Sakamoto called me from behind. However, I didn’t say anything. He must be thinking of saying a taunt like ‘you dare to do such a thing to me’ or something like that, right?

Okay okay, congrats on having such a good relationship. It’s great to have friends, happy?

Sakamoto ignored me as I continued to walk forward, and said,

“I only know him from just a while back, so I don’t really know his personality…”

It didn’t feel like Sakamoto was deliberately talking loudly at me as he said with a normal volume.

“—That idiot, he may be rather interesting.”

For some reason…I stopped at that moment after Sakamoto said that.

“Go, check, on, the, meaning, behind, what, that, guy, just, said.”

Sakamoto only changed his tone at the end, and said that to me in a manner that’s clear and easy to understand, separated word for word..

A sentence that was very clear, easy for me to understand, word for word.

This tone had a certain hope in it, and made me turn back, but I couldn’t see Sakamoto on the corridor anymore.

I rushed out of the school gate in frustration, but there was nothing I could do at home, so I could only just waste my time meaninglessly. There’s no need to buy anything, but I need to leave just before Hazuki comes back and pretend that I just came back from school.

While remaining in my room, I laid down on the bed and look up at the ceiling. The agitated feelings have calmed down, and now my heart felt heavy.

(Can I make it back to Germany in time…)

No, it doesn't matter even if I don't go back now. It's not too late for me to go back to Germany once Hazuki gets used to the surroundings her. That kid's friendly and not afraid of others, so she should be able to make new friends here. Besides, she's at the age where she can learn best, so she should be able to learn Japanese soon. She should be alright even if I'm not around.

(Haa, that can't possibly happen…)

I shook my head to get rid of the idea in my mind. Even if that kid gets used to Japan, daddy and mommy would still be busy. I have nothing to say about imagining my young imouto staying alone in our house and eating dinner alone.

(In the end, the best way is still to get used to Japan fast…)

No matter how hard I think, it can't change anything. I have to get used to this country and learn Japanese, that's the best way. I understand this, definitely, but…

"Haa…"

But I, I just couldn't motivate myself! So what if I can really learn Japanese? There's only those guys staying far away from me in class or those idiots that irritate me. Do I need to learn Japanese just to communicate with these people? That's stupid!

(Even so, I can't just leave it like this…)

Unable to do anything, I could only sigh and take out the Sino-German dictionary. I was just flipping through, and had no intention of checking something out.

Ba [chia] tari (retribution) would mean 'Verdammater'. [Ba] I (twice) would mean doppelt, [ba] ibai (buy and sell) would mean kaufund…

It's okay if it's just ordinary Japanese conversations, but I don't think I could learn kanji, hiragana and katakana all at one go. Why can't we use hiragana? I can't possibly learn them if I'm not locally born!

I continued to try and hold back the urge to throw the dictionary aside, and flipped to the next page.

Bai [ten] (stall) would mean kiosh, ba[ka] here would mean ‘dummkopf’...

On seeing the word ‘baka’, I suddenly remembered what happened in school today. Speaking of which, what did he say when I was about to go home.

As I started to recall, the rage in me started to rise up. I was treated like an idiot by that idiot again and again and again! Since I’m bored now, let’s check up what that idiot’s trying to say! I’ll answer him back in Japanese, and it’ll be my turn to treat him like an idiot!

I got up from my bed and grabbed that dictionary from the table.

(Let me see, what he said was…)

I wrote what he said according to memory. As that idiot was like a broken recorder, repeating the same words over and over again, I was about to remember those strange pronunciations

’cyuu dore buniiro monami.’

I tried looking for words with similar pronunciation. Is it ‘cyunu budore’? Or is it ‘cyuu nubudore’?

I tried looking for it, but I couldn’t find a similar word in Japanese. Would that mean ‘middle (school)? Paddler, Minami’? But there’s no such thing as ‘middle’ in the dictionary. Besides, that phrasing was too weird…

(Uu? This means…)

I was wondering about ‘Monami’. At first, I thought that he just mistook my name ‘Minami’…but on thinking further, that idiot’s been calling me ‘Shimada-san’. Was it not Minami, but something else?

(Monami, monami…mon amie?)

I suddenly recalled that when I was young, before Hazuki was born, our family went on a trip together. On the way, I kept feeling that someone was calling my

name, and couldn’t help but turn around every time I heard that name. Once I had that, daddy and mommy would always smile and explain that they weren’t calling Minami, but mom amie. I remember that phrase is…

I moved from the desk to the cupboard and reached out for a photo album in the cupboard. After flipping a few pages, I suddenly remembered that memorabilia photo.

There’s also a label by mommy at the bottom of the photo.

“Minami 3 Jahre alt in Frankreich."[23]

“Uu!”

I rechecked the words that idiot said on the notebook.

’cyuu dore buniiro monami.’

I even thought that the pronunciation was weird even for Japanese…was that supposed to be French?

On realizing that the sentence may not be in Japanese, I couldn’t help but be mindful of what that idiot was trying to say. I kept my stationery as fast as I could and walked out of the house. There should be a library nearby…!

Once I reached the library, I borrowed an English-French dictionary and an English-German dictionary and started to look for the meaning behind those words. Though the librarian frowned as I was wearing a school uniform, she didn’t say much.

’cyuu dore buniiro monami.’…

I buried myself into the dictionary, trying to understand the words in the dictionary. As there was no French-German dictionary, I could only translate French into English before translating it into German. This is rather difficult, as the only clue’s the pronunciation of that idiot, so I don’t understand how those words were to be jumbled together. That’s the worst part.

I stayed in the library until it was about to close, and finally understood the meaning of the sentence.

’cyuu dore buniiro monami.’ Actually was ‘Tu ne voudrais pas devenir mon amie’.

‘Tu ne voudrais pas’ would be the second-person pronoun of ‘could you’ in English, ‘devenir’ would be ‘become’, and lastly ‘mon amie’ in English…

‘Tu ne voudrais pas devenir mon amie?”

If I translated that into English, it would mean—

‘Could you become my friend?’

At that moment, I lost my breath.

There was no need to translate it into German. I was able to understand what that guy was thinking with just this English sentence.

Why French? Thinking about this, his face appeared in my mind. Did he think that I came from France? Normally, this mistake couldn’t possibly happen…but though impossible, it’s not strange for this to happen if it’s that idiot.

‘Tu ne voudrais pas devenir mom amie?”

I remembered the first time he said that to it. It was ten days after school started —unable to mix into the class well, I was about to go home and forgot about

Homeroom.

‘Tu ne voudrais pas devenir mom amie?”

At that moment, nobody cared about me then, and he was the only one who stopped me, and even said such a thing. He was an idiot, one who couldn’t even speak Japanese well, let alone English—and yet he used a foreign language he was unfamiliar with to talk to me.

I looked down at the piece of paper that was scrawled all over the place just to check the meaning of that one sentence. That’s the time and effort I spent to understand this single sentence, and that wasn’t easy—I guess that idiot didn’t have it easy too. No, because it’s that idiot, it wouldn’t be strange for him to have spent much more time and effort than me. He translated Japanese into French, used a dictionary to check the intonations behind these words, and then used that to check the pronunciation. He translated that into a language he was unfamiliar with, and yet he tried to pronounce it. I could understand how tough that was.

But that idiot was willing to work hard because of me.

He was willing to work hard and study a dictionary of a language he wasn’t familiar with, all just for me, who only knew him for ten days then and didn’t interact much with him.

He must be someone clumsy who did everything to no avail, right? If it wasn’t, he wouldn’t mix up German with French, and wouldn’t deliberately come over to speak to me. If it was me, I would ask sensei first. If I have no confidence in my pronunciation, I would write it on a piece of paper to him. Since I’ve already came back to Japan, he could have just said Japanese to me slowly, and I wouldn’t have misunderstood him.

But that idiot mixed up which country I came from, and spent so much time checking up on French, and even frustrated me because he messed up, and he even got scolded badly by me. Yet he was still willing to talk to me. Really, how stupid, how useless is he…and why is he so kind?

Though I’m in the library, a public place, I couldn’t prevent my eyes from heating up.

--I’m so happy.

That emotion rushed up my head simply. In this school, where I had no friends, no way to communicate through language, and where I thought I had to live alone, someone was willing to devote so much for me. I really felt blessed, and this alone made me feel that there’s meaning to continue persevering.

“Erm…”

The female librarian came to me unknowingly, and stared at me worriedly.

“Sorry. I, I’m alright.”

I wiped away the tears in my eyes and smiled at the librarian. The librarian was shocked, yet she seemed to accept my explanation.

“I’ll, go now.”

I started packing the stuff that’s scattered all over the place. On seeing me like this, the librarian turned back, and was ready to return to her seat.

“Erm…”

Now, it’s my turn to call her. Since it’s rare for me to come to the library, let’s borrow a book back.

“Yes, what is it?”

I asked the librarian for the location of the book I want to borrow.

“Is there, a book, for Japanese conversation?”

Let’s leave essays alone for now. At least I want to understand how to talk…and only then can I understand what that person was saying.

“Yoshii!”

When I reached school the next day, I called out at the idiot the moment I saw him.

“Eh? Is, is there something, Shimada-san?”

Yoshii widened his eyes, perhaps surpised that I called him. Really, there’s no need to be so shocked—well, of course he would be. I did bad mouth him badly yesterday.

Seeing him so shocked, I carefully said every single word to prevent him from mistaking.

“We,ll, Yo,sh,ii.”

“U, un.”

“Wa, ta, shi, ha.”

“Uu, ‘what a shit’? Sorry. Did I do something to anger you…?”

MINAMI SHIMADA

Yoshii seemed to misunderstand again. Is it because I separated every single syllable?

This idiot, now he's hearing I (watashi) as 'what a shit'. Even if it sounds a little similar, how can he be thinking that I'm scolding him in this situation! Is my 'watashi' pronunciations so weird? Or did he have quite the deep impression on the 'what a shit'?

"It's not that. I—"

I noticed it too the moment I spoke. It's true that the 'watashi' I said sounded similar to 'what a shit'.

What do I do now? I lowered my head and pondered. If that's the case, I'll change the way I call myself. I don't want him to be scared every time I say 'I'.

My mind suddenly recalled an image of a certain unique way of calling oneself in a TV program I saw before eating dinner.

Can't be helped. Even though it sounded weird, I'll just give up on the 'watashi', as from now onewards…I'll definitely be spending more time with this idiot.

"Well, Yoshii. ''Uchi'' wa—"[24]

Author's Notes

I’m grateful that you bought this book. This is the author of this series, Inoue Kenji.

Because of this volume, this series has reached a memorable 10th volume! It’s because of everyone accompanying me along the way that I felt really blessed. I don’t know how long this story will last, but if possible, I hope that everyone could continue to follow this story.

Alright, it’s now time for a change in topic. Recently, I would occasionally get questions like ‘may I know what sort of environment you work in’, so I would like to use this chance to talk about it.

Basically, I would write at home, but I would often use the library on the weekends. As the library near my house had a PC area, it’s comfortable to work there. They had power sources and wireless internet, the surroundings are quiet, and there was lots of data. It was really the best writing environment.

As it was such a good environment, there were many other users here other than me like the working-class people who’re busy with their work research or some old uncles learning how to use a computer. Also, there’s also some college students who’re in the library writing their reports for their assignments.

Every seat in the library was open, and there was no separated zone, so I could see what others were doing if I moved slightly. On seeing that the people around me were working hard in their projects, I’ll spur myself to work hard.

I would concentrate and write my story and rest in a café inside the library, drink some coffee, have some sweets, wait till I recover before I head back to my seat to work hard. That’s how I work in such a comfortable environment during the weekend.

It was until a certain day. I went back to my seat after resting at the café, and found that what looked like a college student was glancing at my computer.

Ahh…that was a failure. I forgot to cover my PC when I left my seat. Basically, I hid my real identity as I wrote this novel, so it's not really good if someone saw the story I wrote. It'll be great if nobody noticed that I was writing Baka Test…

Though worried, I couldn't help but have some expectation deep inside my heart.

If that girl was a reader of Baka Test…would she suspect anything after seeing the names 'Akihisa' or 'Yuuji' on that PC screen? If that's really the case, I'll definitely be happy. But even though I'm happy, it's not good to a certain extent that a half-written script was seen.

I apologized deep inside my heart 'sorry, but please don't read too hard into it', went back to my seat, looked at the screen, and wanted to finish the story.

At this moment, I found out what was typed onto the screen.

> *The moment I realized it,*
> *I was always chasing you.*
> *The moment I started remembering,*
> *I was always chasing your smile.*
> *Kinoshita Hideyoshi.*
> *If I'm the sunflower.*
> *You're the sun shining on me.* [1]

DON'T READ IT!!!

No, that's not right! I wasn't using a commanding tone! Please don't look, just leave it as me begging you! No, please erase what you just saw from your brain! Whether it's those words you saw or my existence, just erase them off!!

That's already past being ashamed. Anyone who sees this part will treat me as a super disgusting guy with a weird brain. Thinking about the person I like and writing this poem, and the other guy's called 'Kinoshita Hideyoshi'. That's a

guy’s name no matter how you look at it. No wonder she was so bothered! She must be wondering ‘what the hell did that guy type in’…

I hurriedly covered my PC to prevent more things from being seen. At this moment, I suddenly noticed the reference material I placed there a while back.

‘Easy to understand Modern Poems (with reciting CD)’

That’s not how it’s like! Don’t look, forget about it. Well, I was really idiotic for praying like this deep inside my heart. It’s true that it’s my fault for leaving my fault with my PC opened, bu, but…at least let for explain! I’m writing a story called Baka Test! The things you see here are all supposed to be used for the plot! Please let me explain!

In the past, I blurted out the word ‘sou-uke’ in front of my superior, but the shame this time was way more powerful than that! Even after reaching home, I was blushing in shame, and my body was completely hot. I would definitely close my PC whenever I was working at a family restaurant, but I was careless about forgetting to do that at the library. As the library was peaceful and quiet, it was inevitable that I would let my guard down once. I hope that no matter where I am in the future, I can work cautiously and avoid making this mistake again. But I guess I won’t be at that library for quite a while.

Oh yeah, as for the Tsunemura poem I just remembered, it was born as a prototype written by Sekine Ayumi-san, one of the animators of Baka Test. To match the number of pages, I had to edit a lot. Actually, the ‘Sun and the Sunflower’ poem Sekine-san wrote was a brilliant one. When I mentioned that ‘I needed a poem that the readers will be so hurt and painful that they couldn’t take it’, Sekine-san really wrote a painful and humiliating piece of work for me. I hope that I can show the original to everyone…but will this be good for Sekine-san? I really can’t tell.

And now, it’s time to change topics. It’s a collection of short stories again, so allow me to explain the backstory behind all these stories to everyone. There may be some spoilers in this, so to the readers who haven’t read this book, we’ll part here for now.

Me and Doubt and a Man's Pride

This was a happy strip poker story with the girls, and the timeframe should be between the 6th and 7th volume.

It was supposed to be a story of ‘fanservice’, but for some reason, it ended up in a unique situation where the guys having to strip. Recently, I’ve been thinking that the girls in Baka Test are more manly that the guys in it. Most notably, Mizuki’s statement when she said “Even if I have to take off my last piece of clothing, I don’t intend to end this game halfway through~” isn’t something anyone will dare say randomly. What happened to the ‘traditional pure heroine’ when I started writing Baka Test!? Like Kubo-kun, she probably went off far away. When I started off, I designated her as a girl ‘who’s weak and can’t cook’, but now she became a strong heroine who didn’t need to think too much. That’s way too scary…

On a side note, in this story, the fools were all done by Mizuki, Shouko and Kubo. Dear readers, please widen your eyes and pay attention. THESE THREE ARE THE TOP THREE STUDENTS OF THE SECOND-YEAR BATCH OF THE HIGH-TECH FAMOUS SCHOOL ‘FUMITZUKI GAKUEN’!

Me and Real Motive and Summoned Beast

This was a comedy I always wanted to try out. This was another story that happened during summer vacation, after the doubt incident. Class E’s rep Nakabayashi-san debuted here, but unfortunately, she was rejected because of that tragic reason the moment she debuted. It seems that she hates Akihisa because of this, but who could blame him.

It’s good that good friends can say their true thoughts out, as it shows how good their relationship. It’s something worth celebrating over…but things just won’t be that smooth sailing. Some things are only ‘good’ once they’re hidden. Once others know of the truth, what’s left in the heart may only be regret. It’s possible anyway. No, wait, I’m not self-depreciating. It’s just that I hope that everyone understand something. Not all perverts are bishounen!

Me and Lottery and The Pot of Darkness

This was a short story that could be guessed from the title. It happened after the 7th volume.

Actually, this was a short story I used to practice when I was writing volume 2 and refined. I added some characters to reflect the current situation, and changed the timeframe. In the end—the only similarity with the original was the ‘hotpot’. If I had known that, I might as well rewrite everything else. It may be even more relaxing…

Speaking of which, it’s interesting to read the original script I wrote. The scenario I wrote at that time had Minami as a girl who couldn’t cook. In the original script, Minami even added cat litter into the dark hotpot. The me then should have been more careful. I wouldn’t be able to comment about this if even Minami became like that.

Me and Japan and the Language I'm Unfamiliar With

This happened when Akihisa and the gang first entered school. It’s a story 1 and half years back from the main storyline. At that time, Akihisa was still calling Yuuji ‘Sakamoto-kun’, and it sort of felt weird.

Not only Minami, everyone including Akihisa met for the first time. After a while, it linked to Hazuki’s story in volume 3.5, and then back to the main storyline in volume 1. Speaking of which, past, Mizuki and Shouko didn’t appear then, which I found was a rather lonely thing. However, Minami didn’t appear in the doubt game story.

As for the foreign languages that appeared in the story, there may be errors like the usual test questions. If there’s a chance to use those words again, I strongly recommend that everyone should verify it through. It’ll be cool if I can straight my back and declare loudly ‘no problems at all! I can use this sentence whenever I want to!’ but unfortunately…I’m really sorry.

As I explain these stories, there’s not many pages left for the afterword, so let’s begin with the usual thanks.

Haga-sensei, who’s in charge of the covers and illustrations; We’ve continued to push for a male character cover, and we finally succeeded! How touching! No, I wasn’t especially happy about that, it’s just that the readers were all hoping for it ‘YAAAHHHOOOOOO!!!’

K-sama, who’s in charge of editing. I’m really grateful that you’ll grant my

passionate wish for a ‘male character to appear on the cover page’. On a side note, do you know that Baka Test has a lot of male characters…no, please don’t give me that irritated look, I was merely half-joking. Also, I’m sorry for pressing you so hard. It’s thanks to K-sama’s help that this volume could publish. Allow me to show my thanks and appreciations.

Kagaya-san, who’s in charge of edits. I would add some unique wording in every page, and you had to spend time correcting time, but you helped make up for my lack of writing ability. I’m really grateful to you, and I hope to learn more from you in the future.

To everyone involved in the anime and manga, I killed off a lot of my brain cells writing this novel, so I’m bothered that I couldn’t help much. Also, I’ve become one of your loyal readers (viewers). Every episode was interesting, and I would look forward to it. Maybe it might be even more interesting if it doesn’t involve me…

Of course, most important, the readers. With everyone’s support, this series has reached the 10th volume. I’m really grateful to everyone. To the mails and emails and all sorts of stuff, I couldn’t reply to them, but I read through them happily. I don’t know whether I can meet every reader’s expectations, but I’ll work hard to write more stories. I hope that the readers will continue to guide me through and follow through this work.

Finally, a little preview for the next volume. In volume 8, the next main story, it will likely continue off from the dark hotpot ending—where Mizuki and Akihisa ended up living with each other. It’s about time to change the direction of the story and the characters, but how will it end up…I haven’t really thought of what to write, so I couldn’t say much. Anyone, everyone, please look forward to Akihisa’s pitiful side when he’s attacked for living together with Mizuki! The ‘fanservice’ illustrations in the next volume seem like it will increase (regardless of gender), and I’m looking forward to it personally.

Then, let’s meet again on the stage of Baka Test.

Notes

1. ↑ Social Inequality. , kaku **sa mon**dai. sa mon=summon, the way the Japanese pronounce it.
2. ↑ Again, Sa mon. Man, Shouko really got the hang of it there.
3. ↑ Again, Sa mon. Way to go, Akihisa.
4. ↑ Sadness: (setsuna- **sa**), Continual worries () **mon**mon
5. ↑ No problems: (daijoubu- **sa**), Problems: (**mon**dai). If anyone can correct the order in a way that can fit, please be my guest.
6. ↑ If you're wondering, it happened in Volume 5. That's the last of three house visits. The first one, which was animated, was at Akihisa's house. The second was Minami (supposed to be Yuuji, but they ended up going to Minami's house so that they could take care of Hazuki. Oh, and Sakamoto Yukino appeared in that story). The last trip was to Shouko's mansion (note, mansion, not house), and we find out that Yuuji had a room prepared for him...
7. ↑ Chicken breast (, torisasami) and shears () kanabasami.
8. ↑ Mochi () is a Japanese rice cake made of glutinous rice (not to be confused with gluten) pounded into paste and molded into shape.
9. ↑ Konjac (), elephant yam.
10. ↑ Note that Minami's text was given in katakana to specify the accent.
11. ↑
12. ↑
13. ↑ Wait, please listen to me!
14. ↑ Let’s get out, Kinoshita!
15. ↑ Are you an idiot!? Why did you go into the guys’ toilet!?
16. ↑ I’m doing this for your own good! From today onward, you better go to the female toilet!
17. ↑ ,, ari , ori, haberi, imasokari, given in hiragana since Minami couldn’t understand
18. ↑ , elegant in kansai Japanese, also known as a name of a certain kind of tofu brand mascot
19. ↑ Kyoto dialect, basicly part of Kansai dialect

20. ↑ watashi
21. ↑ I’ve never been so humiliated in my life! You must be ready now if you dared to say such things!
22. ↑ WHAT DID YOU SAY
23. ↑ Minami, 3 years old, in France.
24. ↑ Means I, but as an Osaka dialect for girls.